



NATIONAL RAILWAY BULLETIN

VOLUME 43, NUMBER 5, 1978





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The Society's official publication, the *National Railway Bulletin*, is sent to all Associate and Chapter members. All National and Chapter Officers and Directors serve voluntarily and without remuneration.

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COVER PHOTO: Ronald C. Hill captures the essence of modern railroading with his shot of a westbound Sante Fe merchandise train below Abo Canyon at Sais, N.M., on January 13, 1975.

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Articles in this magazine do not express the official NRHS position on any subject unless specifically designated as such.

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VACAVILLE'S RAILROAD ERA

1870-1930

RONALD H. LIMBAUGH



*The Story of a Small Town
and its Vital Dependence
on Good Railway Service*

Vacaville, Calif. today is a pleasant bedroom community of 30,000 within an hour's commute of both Sacramento and San Francisco. Nearly a century ago it was the center of a nationally recognized fresh fruit district which produced some of the earliest apricots, cherries, peaches, plums and grapes to reach the market.

The success of this industry depended on fast, safe and cheap rail transportation. By 1869 Vacaville had a rail connection to the East and by the mid-1870's fruit shipments on a regular commercial basis had begun, but for 30 years thereafter growers struggled to improve rail service and, most importantly, to lower freight rates. Eventually another railroad entered the town to break the Southern Pacific's grip, but Espee continued to dominate the industry with better equipment and more direct routes to eastern markets. Technological advances, increased competition and consumer demand all helped improve freight and passenger service for a few years after 1900, but neither the railroads nor their customers in the fresh fruit district were ever fully satisfied.

The Vaca Valley & Clear Lake Railroad never lived up to its corporate name. After reorganizing the defunct original line to Vacaville in 1870, one year after it was constructed, Andrew M. and G. Bushrod Stevenson built an extension to Winters in 1875. With new money and dreams of laying tracks to Mendocino County timber supplies, the Stevenson brothers reincorporated in 1877, extended to Madison, and added "Clear Lake" to the name. As an independent feeder with 30 miles of track, a single locomotive, one passenger car, ten flat cars and a few other pieces of rolling stock, the railroad ran on a shoestring until 1888 but managed to keep its books in the black. By 1887 it was showing an annual net profit of \$26,000 and had begun constructing the next leg to Rumsey.

In the meantime the Central Pacific's Big Four had reorganized and were rapidly absorbing California shortlines into the new and sprawling Southern Pacific system. Espee bought out the Stevenson brothers early in 1888 but retained the branch line's corporate name. With Southern Pacific land agents leading the way, the Vaca Valley company pushed rapidly to Esparto, Capay, Cadenasso, Guinda and Rumsey. It went no further, and in 1934 the Capay-Rumsey

section was abandoned. Evidently the Clear Lake dreams had been forgotten long before.

New management on the Vaca Valley road did not change the railroad's friendly, rather informal service. Riding on rough wooden seats in an unheated passenger car whose aisles were crammed with baggage perhaps wasn't the ideal way to travel, but passengers liked the trainmen and usually could get them to make unscheduled stops even though they were officially forbidden. One dark night in 1888 a farmer's wife stopped the train three times between Capay and Rumsey before she found her house by the sound of her barking dog. The train finally arrived in Rumsey two hours late.

Even crews on the Espee's main line trains tried to be accommodating, especially to local dignitaries, as County Superintendent Daniel Corn discovered on a Saturday night in 1891. Delayed by business in Dixon, he missed the regular passenger run back to Elmira but boarded the next freight with the help of a friendly conductor who explained the train didn't stop at Elmira but would slow down so he could hop off. Evidently the engineer didn't get the message, for the train barely slackened speed as it approached Corn's destination. He jumped anyway, tumbled head over heels, picked himself up in a daze and started walking. Vacaville was nearly in sight before he realized he had broken his collarbone.

If personal service made up for physical discomforts on the passenger runs, nothing but lower freight rates could placate the fruit growers whose chronic and often bitter battles with the Southern Pacific were part of a larger agrarian crusade against railroad rate discrimination that

colored much of the nation's history between the Civil War and World War I. Even after discounting overblown rhetoric on both sides, Vacaville growers — at least in the Eighties — had reason to protest; they paid far more to deliver fruit to eastern markets than did other nearby shippers. The freight rate from Sacramento to Chicago in 1883 was \$500 per fruit car; from Vacaville to Chicago the rate was \$800. These rates dropped and became more equitable during the next two decades, but not as much as Vacaville growers felt they should.

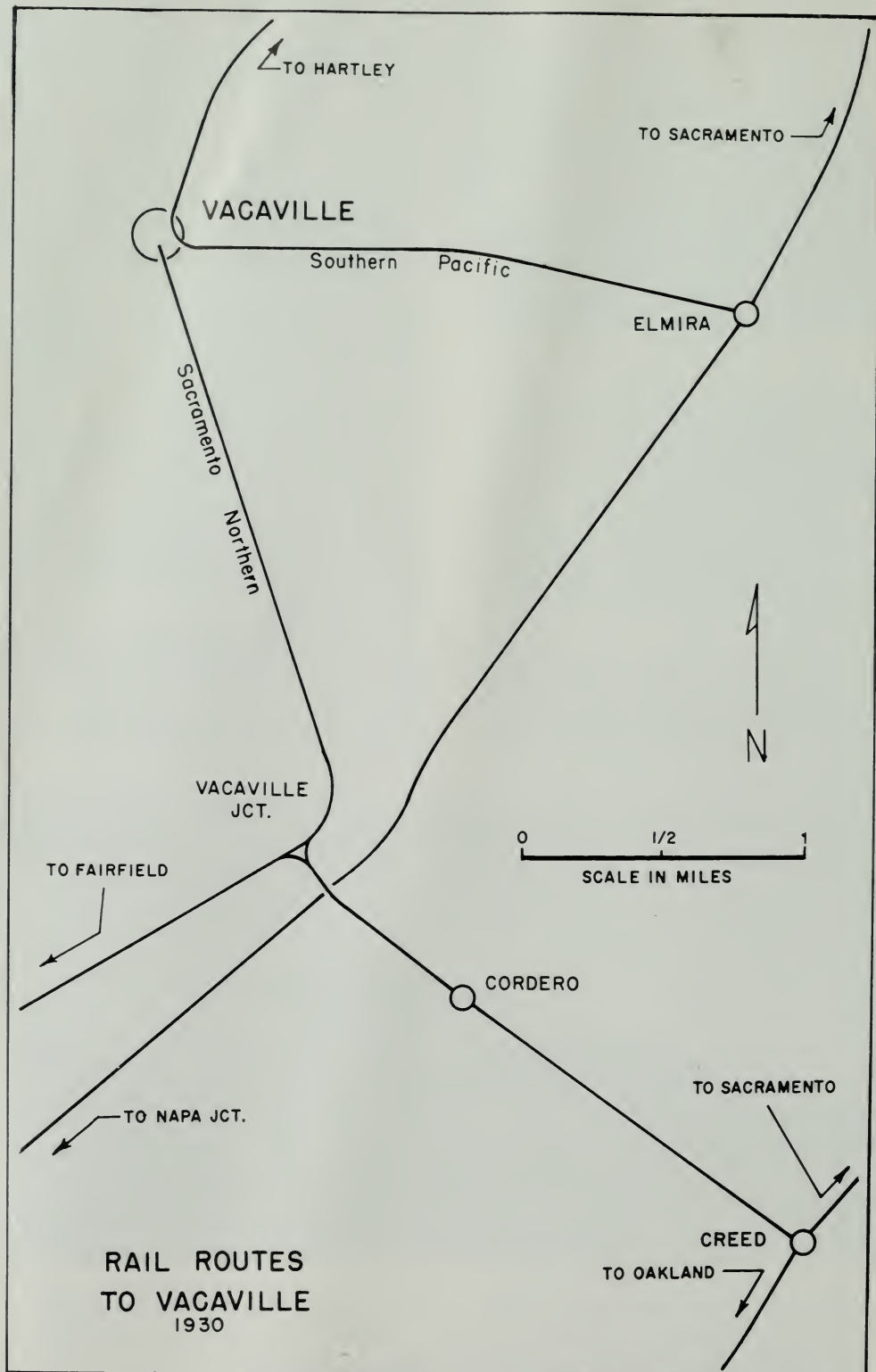
Railroad officials explained rate discrepancies by distinguishing between big and little shippers, long and short hauls, main line service and way traffic. Long haul rates between major terminal points such as Sacramento and Chicago were much lower per ton-mile than short haul rates along feeder lines which required more time, effort and overhead. For example, to handle Vacaville freight the railroad had to use switch engines and extra personnel to distribute empty cars to local sidings and return them to Elmira where a local freight brought them to the central yards at Roseville. Vacaville shippers understood and accepted reasonable freight differentials but they believed that Southern Pacific rates were exorbitant, and the railroad's tactless admission that it charged as much as the traffic would bear only made them more determined than ever to fight.

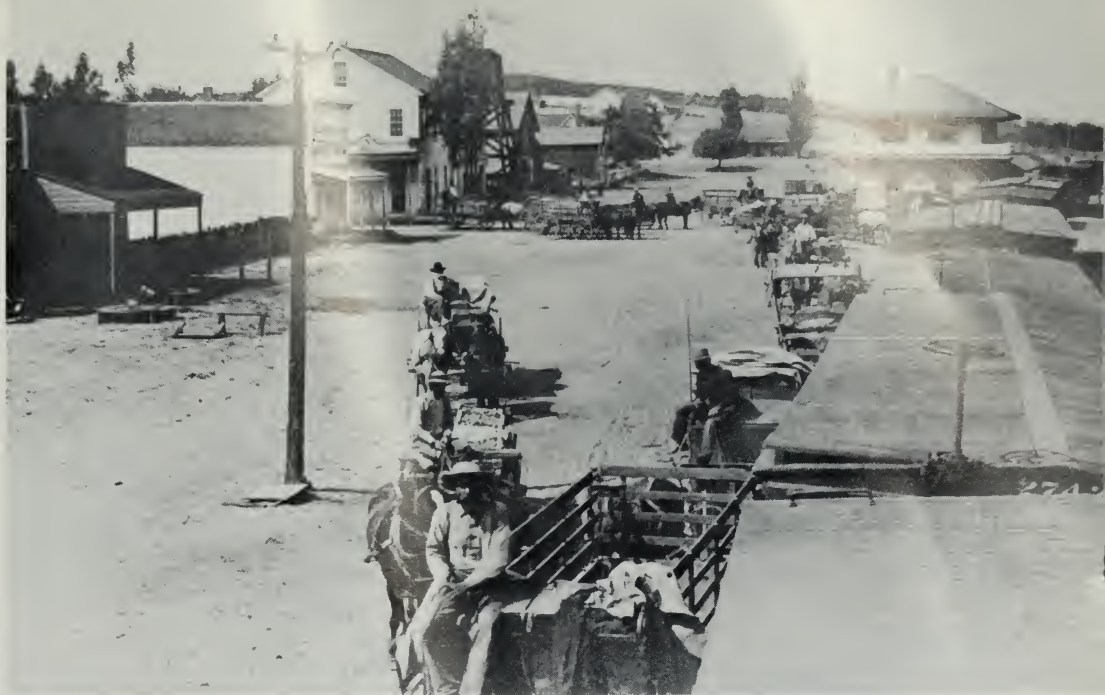
Between 1870 and 1910, breaking the power of the Southern Pacific was an absorbing passion for most California farmers and merchants, including those in Vacaville. So long and bitter was the struggle, and so pervasive the anti-railroad rhetoric, that not until recently have revisionist historians begun to tear down the



California Railway Museum

Northern Electric Railway locomotive No. 701 is seen constructing the line near Vacaville in 1914. Actual laying of ties and rails began in 1912 and the first piece of rail was inserted at the Plaza in Suisun on August 14, 1912. Work progressed up Main St. towards Fairfield, the adjacent town on the opposite side of the Southern Pacific's main line where the interurban crossed the SP at grade. By September 26, 1913, rails were complete to Fairfield and work then began northward to Vacaville.





Vacaville Heritage Council

Fruit wagons and teamsters loading cars in Vacaville about 1881. The Suisun-Vacaville branch of Northern Electric was located on the west side of the lower Sacramento Valley in Solano County. This was the heart of a very rich farming area which produced high grade fruits (these were fancy packed and sent to Eastern markets), and other agricultural and dairy products.

stereotypes and reconstruct a more balanced picture of Southern Pacific's role in California history. The freight rate controversy was only part of the conflict which involved political and economic issues beyond the scope of this article, but Vacaville was an active participant in at least some of these battles and it cheered from the sidelines in others. On the railroad question, neither apathy or objectivity could be found in California before World War I.

Although Vacaville growers lost considerable business during the Pullman strike in 1894, many were able to salvage a part of their crops by drying. The fact that the district was able to ship 1,200 cars of green and dried fruit for the 1894 season, an increase of 52 percent over the previous year, indicates that local industry was not as severely crippled as anti-railroad literature seems to suggest. Nevertheless, the effects of the strike and the railroad's overall attitude heaped salt on open sores.

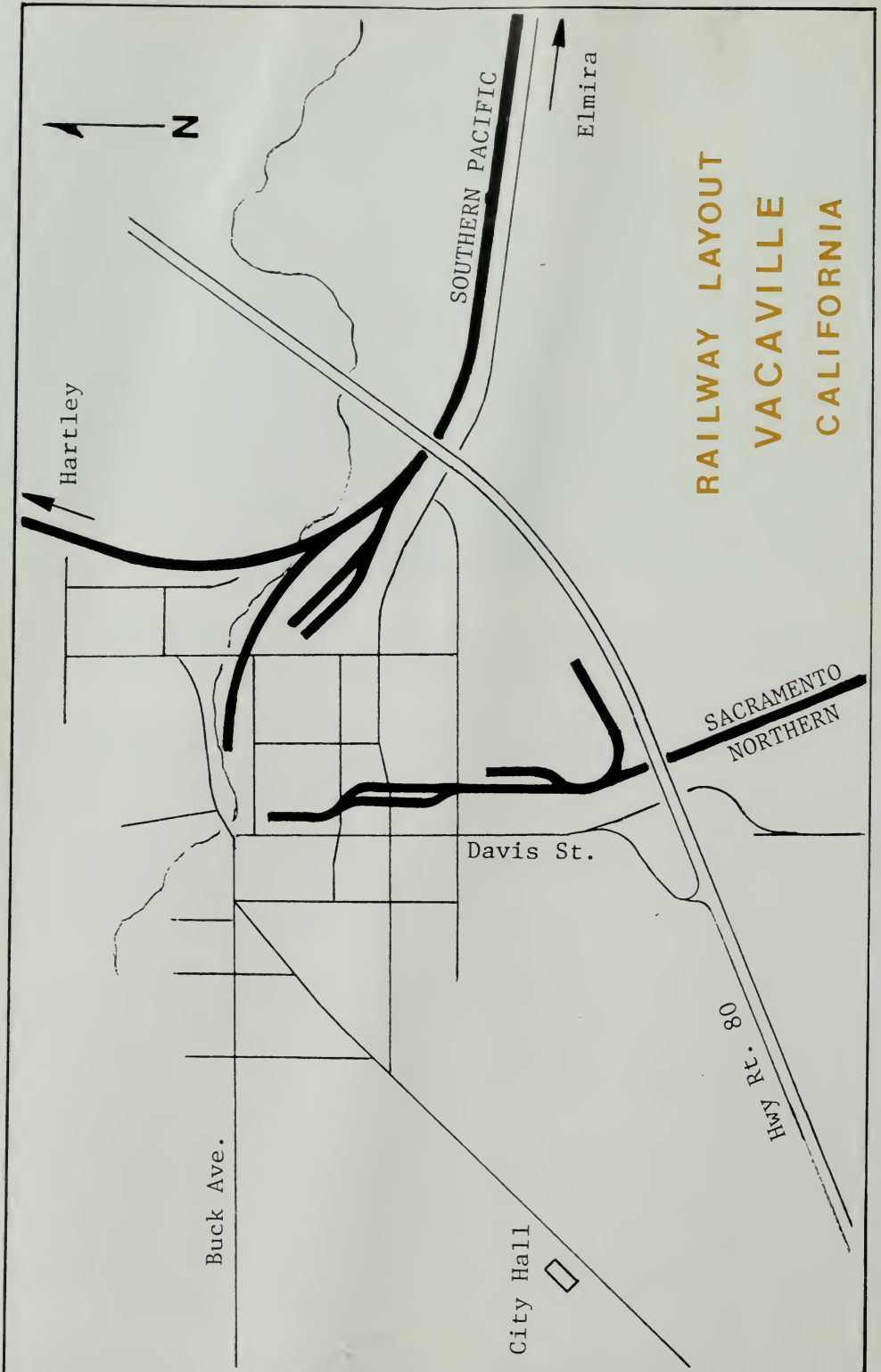
Despite other railroad irritations, the freight rate problem remained the number one priority for California fruit growers. To attack the problem they used two different strategies. One was to fight fire with fire by trying to bring together all producers and shippers in cooperative marketing organizations that had the collective power to negotiate freight rate reductions. For the northern California deciduous fruit industry, the California Fruit Union was the first major collective effort. Taking advantage of the railroad's offer to reduce rates on single shipments of 15 cars or more, CFU between 1888

and 1894 served primarily the largest growers and shippers who could combine lots to meet the requirements. But CFU was no panacea; it did little for the smaller growers and it was under constant criticism because of its marketing arrangements with Porter Brothers, a Chicago-based brokerage firm which had exclusive rights to handle CFU fruit. For several years CFU Manager Leonard W. Buck kept members in line despite internal squabbling and external rivalry, but the Union collapsed during the economic upheavals following the Panic of 1893.

Other cooperatives followed the CFU, the most successful being the California Fruit Exchange which has dominated the deciduous industry since the late 1920's, and its counterpart in the citrus industry, the California Fruit Growers Exchange, known worldwide by its "Sunkist" brand. But despite desultory and often frustrating efforts toward consolidation, which will be discussed in more detail later, railroad rates did not drop as dramatically as organized shippers and growers desired. For the smaller independent growers, the big co-ops were no help at all in dealing with Southern Pacific. Many growers, big and small, thought the fruit industry — indeed, the entire State — would be better served by following a second strategy aimed at breaking the railroad's power, either through divestiture or competition.

Divesting the Southern Pacific of its accumulated parts was like trying to untangle a Gordian knot. Existing legislation was too weak

**RAILWAY LAYOUT
VACAVILLE
CALIFORNIA**



F. A. Weer

to begin with and was further emasculated by court opinions defending private property rights from public interference. California populists for a time in the 1890s hoped to slice away the Central Pacific and operate it as a public enterprise after Collis P. Huntington refused to pay back the government loans which had financed its construction in the 1860s, but Congress eventually allowed the Espee to refinance and thereby prevented a showdown. Huntington died in 1900 and the bulk of his estate, including controlling interest in Southern Pacific, passed to his wife Arabella and nephew Henry E. Huntington, who sold out to E. H. Harriman and invested the profits in Southern California real estate and electric railroads. Eventually Henry and Arabella married, thus reuniting the Huntington fortune. By that time Harriman's control over both Espee and Union Pacific had come under attack, and the courts finally broke up the combination in 1913. The dissolution, however, left Southern Pacific with the same holdings it had before the UP merger, so nothing really changed.

Restoring competition seemed more feasible than using legal weapons against Southern Pacific. In Vacaville, anti-monopolists had been hatching plans for years to break out of Huntington's grip. Some of these plans seemed farfetched, like damming Ulatis Creek to create locks for fruit boats, or constructing a horse-drawn railroad through the Vaca Valley with spur lines running to each packing house, but by 1890 the idea of a competing steam or electric railroad seemed the most plausible. Such plans, however remote, were disturbing to Espee officials who responded with promises of better service. Less than a week after he ousted Leland

Stanford to become the new president of the road, Huntington toured Vaca Valley and announced, to the surprise of local dignitaries and perhaps even his own lieutenants, that Southern Pacific would soon build a feeder line through the heart of the valley. For weeks the community buzzed with excitement, but soon the papers began calling it a bluff to stifle competition. They may have been right, for railroad officials never mentioned it again.

Espee was able to hold off outside competition in Northern California until the late 1890's, when the Santa Fe finally pushed north from Mojave. By 1900 it had completed connections to Oakland, giving San Francisco a long-awaited second transcontinental route and lifting the hopes of Espee opponents that competition would soon force rates to drop. In Vacaville, rumors that Santa Fe would extend its operations to Sacramento were magnified into hopes that new feeders would soon reach into the fruit districts, but both expectations proved false. The south bank of the Sacramento-San Joaquin delta turned out to be the northernmost point of the rival railroad, and Vacaville was too far away to make much use of it.

Hope rebounded in the first decade of the new century when Solano County felt the effects of the electric railroad fever which was beginning to sweep the country. The need for quieter and cleaner mass transit, particularly in urban areas, had been apparent ever since people and horses first came into close contact with the belching, hissing and smoking iron monsters of the 19th century. Before the development of electric locomotion the best alternative to the steam engine in downtown traffic had been the cable

Vacaville Heritage Council

An early view of a Southern Pacific fruit train at Vacaville, Calif. By 1869 Vacaville had rail connections to the East and by the mid-1870's fruit shipments had begun on a regular basis. Nearly a century ago the Sacramento Valley was a nationally recognized fresh fruit district which produced some of the earliest shipments of apricots, cherries, peaches, plums and grapes to reach urban markets. At left, the map indicates trackage in more recent years.



car, which by the 1880's had spread from its San Francisco origins to several cities in the East. But cable transportation had definite practical limits and was also very expensive to install. As a result most urban centers used whatever conveyances they had, however unsatisfactory, and waited for better prospects. They came in the 1890's when the first practical electric transit systems were developed. The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad by 1895 was using electric locomotives in its Baltimore tunnel and other eastern cities installed electric lines soon after.

By the turn of the century the new industry had begun to attract nationwide interest, and new infusions of capital stimulated the first construction boom which lasted until a financial crisis ended it in 1904. A year later building revived but was again cut short after the Panic of 1907. By World War I, when their last growth period came to a close, electric railroads served most of the major urban centers of the country.

Situated between two major centers of population which electric railroad promoters hoped to connect, Vacaville residents eagerly awaited the anticipated construction boom. In 1904 they welcomed the news that Colonel J. W. Hartzell of Illinois, who was building an interurban line from Napa to Vallejo, had secured a Solano County franchise for a Woodland-Suisun route via Winters and Vacaville, with promises for future connections to Vallejo and San Francisco. Later that same year, for a bid of \$25, Vacaville trustees awarded Hartzell a local franchise which required construction of a line through town to begin by October 15, 1906.

Although interurbans were designed primarily to serve passengers, Hartzell's representatives initially proposed to haul freight cars by steam engine to either Suisun or Vallejo, where they would be ferried across the Strait to make connections with the Sante Fe. For two years the Hartzell interests did little more than collect additional franchises, thereby preventing interference from rivals, but in January, 1906, Hartzell, with English capital, incorporated the San Francisco, Vallejo & Vaca Valley Railway and Steamship Company. The plans now called for an 80-mile electric railroad across Solano County, with ferry connections to San Francisco. Rumors spread that Hartzell was tied to San Francisco investors who wanted to extend electric feeder lines at least to the Sierras and perhaps farther, but the 1906 earthquake disrupted these plans, real or fanciful, and Hartzell died unexpectedly at the end of the year before any construction had begun.

In the meantime other promoters appeared in Solano County, the most active being Melville Dozier, reported by the press to be the chief engineer of Henry Huntington's Pacific Electric in Southern California. The Huntington line, whose 700 miles of track made it the largest interurban west of the Mississippi, reached out to the far corners of the Los Angeles basin and laid the foundations for the urban sprawl that the automobile later accelerated. Huntington's name, despite its Southern Pacific connotations, cast a golden glow in business circles, and local

observers confidently predicted a bright future for Dozier's line, incorporated in November, 1906 as the Vallejo & Northern Railway Company. As he announced plans to construct a line between Sacramento and Vallejo via Woodland, Vacaville and Suisun — nearly the same route as the defunct Hartzell proposal — Dozier denied any connection with either Huntington or the Southern Pacific. However, he did not refute still another rumor that the V&N was backed by the Western Pacific, a new company organized to lay track between Oakland and Salt Lake City where it would connect with George Gould's Denver & Rio Grande Western, thus providing the Gould interests with a Pacific Coast outlet. Actually the rumors anticipated Western Pacific's direct service to Solano County by about 15 years, as we shall see, although Gould money evidently supported at least some of the electric interurbans in northern California. Western Pacific followed the Feather River Canyon, absorbed a Central Valley line and entered Oakland by way of Stockton in 1910, but financial records for the era are so misleading and obscure that it is almost impossible to determine just who owned what.

The Panic of 1907 and right-of-way problems delayed V&N's construction plans nearly four years, long after Melville Dozier had left the company and returned to Los Angeles. Southern Pacific held the only good route between Vallejo and Suisun, via Jameson Canyon, and the infamous "railroad legislature" of 1907 obligingly expanded canyon rights-of-way by almost 20 feet, making it even harder for competitors to gain entrance. V&N officials eventually had to undertake expensive condemnation proceedings against one Jameson Canyon rancher to secure a right-of-way paralleling the Espee tracks, but the rival road never built on the route.

While the Vallejo & Northern was still deep in litigation, another northern California electric railroad began to express interest in Solano County. In 1906 H. A. Butters, a builder of Latin American railways before turning his attention to the Sacramento Valley, joined forces with investors from Pacific Gas & Electric Company to take control of a small electric line that had begun in Chico. Reincorporated as the Northern Electric, the Butters road built to Oroville in 1906 and to Sacramento the following year. In May, 1907, Sacramento newspapers reported that Butters was seeking eastern capital to buy out the Vallejo & Northern, which still had not begun construction, and complete a branch line to San Francisco via Woodland, Vacaville, Suisun and Vallejo. The plans were premature, for a financial panic wiped out investment capital and delayed the takeover for six years. In the meantime the Vallejo & Northern played a coy waiting game. To hold the franchises which it had acquired partly through purchase from the old Hartzell interests and partly as a result of new promises to city and county officials, it shoveled a little dirt here and there before construction deadlines passed. In Vacaville, two days before the town trustees' deadline of



California Railway Museum

The Plaza at Suisun City, Calif. about 1925. This was the station location for Northern Electric. A source of information as to the date of the beginning of passenger service on this branch was found in the *Sacramento Bee* for Saturday, May 16, 1914: "Suisun, May 16th: The Northern Electric Railway Company will establish a passenger service between Suisun and Vacaville tomorrow, making four trips as follows: Leave Suisun at 8:00 and 9:35 AM and 2:35 and 7:25 PM. Returning from Vacaville the car will arrive at Suisun at 9:15 and 11:00 AM and 4:00 and 8:30 PM. Fare each way will be 35c."

August 8, 1910, a handful of men arrived and laid a single piece of rail on Davis Street. "It is entirely covered over," reported the Vacaville press, "and would therefore escape the notice of the most observing person — but it serves the purpose."

The following year the V&N showed its first real signs of life by launching construction of the Woodland-Sacramento section. Prompted by renewed negotiations for sale to the Northern Electric, it completed the Woodland branch in July, 1912, and one month later began the Suisun-Vacaville segment. After a month of preparations, including the hiring of 50 teamsters and work crews, grading began simultaneously in Suisun and three miles south of the Vacaville town limits. "It really begins to look as though the Vallejo & Northern would be running cars into Vacaville sometime before the members of the present generation are gathered unto their fathers," said the Vacaville editor. Considering the history of roads like the V&N, his reservations were not surprising.

It took more than a year to complete the work, during which the Northern Electric finally took over and the Vacaville trustees reluctantly granted another extension on the franchise after the completion deadline had passed. But on October 28, 1913, tracklaying crews crossed the town boundary, and seven days later scheduled service began between Vacaville and Suisun.

If Vaca Valley farmers expected relief at last from the Southern Pacific squeeze, they were to be disappointed. The Vacaville-Woodland section of V&N was never built, and Suisun's anticipated steamboat connections to San Fran-

cisco and to the Western Pacific were largely illusory. The real fresh fruit markets were in the East by the fastest and most direct route. Had a direct line to Sacramento been available in 1913 perhaps freight traffic on the interurban might have picked up, but electric railroads, with few exceptions, were not really built for carlot freight service in the first place. Lacking freight equipment and unable to transship without added expense to the patron, interurban electrics in northern California simply could not accommodate transcontinental freight traffic and had to depend almost entirely on local less-than-carlot shipments for what freight business there was.

Much more important was passenger traffic, which accounted for more than 90 percent of interurban gross receipts in the U.S. by 1920. Passenger service between Vacaville and Suisun began May 17, 1914, with four round trips daily and an 11 pm special every Saturday night. The ride in enclosed wooden Niles passenger cars was comfortable if not luxurious, and convenient connections by rail or independent steamboat to San Francisco or points east drew passenger traffic away from the Vacaville-Elmira branch of the Southern Pacific. But both railroads found themselves fighting a losing battle with the automobile for passenger traffic, especially after the main highway between Sacramento and San Francisco was routed through Vacaville in 1912. The interurban stopped carrying passengers from Vacaville in 1926, and the Espee followed suit in 1934.

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The Santa Fe Through Abo Canyon

Photos and Text: Ronald C. Hill

Opposite, Santa Fe SD45 No. 5045 and two other Santa Fe units power a piggyback hotshot as it winds out of Abo Canyon at Scholle, N.M. on January 12, 1978. Plans to develop the Belen Cutoff were developed by the AT&SF between 1878 and 1902 and by 1903 construction was underway. Located 30 miles south of Albuquerque and 25 miles southeast of Belen, Abo Pass crosses the Continental Divide at Mountainair, N.M.

The original Santa Fe main line gained entrance to the West via Raton and Glorietta Passes. Although the AT&SF won the right to use Raton Pass from the Denver & Rio Grande in 1878, that victory was rather hollow from an operating point of view. The grade on Raton was three percent or more in places and helper locomotives were needed on virtually all trains. Glorietta Pass, further west, compounded the problem. These expensive and time-consuming difficulties soon led the railroad to seek an easier and more flexible alternate route to California.

After considerable thought and discussion, the Eastern Railway Company of New Mexico was organized as a Santa Fe subsidiary, and in 1903 it granted a construction contract to build the "Belen Cutoff" from Clovis to Belen, across the comparatively flat center portion of New Mexico. The total project involved 278 miles, of which 249 stretched from Mexico to Belen. Several lengthy delays occurred but most of the basic work was completed in 1907. While trains actually ran over the Belen Cutoff by late 1907, the new trackage was not formally turned over to the operating department until July 1, 1908, and even then more ballasting and fencing was required.

The new line accomplished its purpose with perfection. The westbound climb never exceeds .6 percent whereas the eastbound ascending grade reaches a maximum of 1.25 percent during the 18-mile span between Sais and Abo Summit

at Mountainair, New Mexico. After completion of the Belen Cutoff, traffic was steadily diverted from the northern route through La Junta, Colorado, to the new road by way of Wellington, Kansas, Amarillo, Texas and Clovis, New Mexico. Early passenger trains to operate over the cutoff include the **Scout** and the **Missionary**; the last was the **San Francisco Chief**. Soon the cutoff carried more traffic than any other line in the Southwest and, as business increased, a few double-track sections were added between Clovis and Vaughan. Centralized traffic control was installed during 1943 and 1944 and some sidings were increased in length to facilitate "running meets." Throughout the age of steam, helper engines were still found on many eastward trains from Belen to Mountainair but the fast, modern diesel-powered freights of today do not receive assistance up the grade.

From Belen the rails climb steadily eastward out of the Rio Grande River Valley for 24 miles until they confront the rugged Manzano Mountains looming above the desert near Sais. Then the tracks curve as they rise along the face of the mountains, and the gradient increases to 1.25 percent. There the railroad first crosses the Abo River on a magnificent high bridge which is more than 500 feet long.

By far the most impressive segment of the entire Belen Cutoff is found in short, serpentine

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Below, the vast New Mexico desert stretches to infinity behind a typically short, fast Santa Fe train as it climbs eastward into the Manzano Mountains and crosses the first dramatic steel and concrete bridge over the Abo River. An SD40 and two SD45's are in charge in this January 1978 scene near Sais.





On January 12, 1978, Author Hill photographed a solid piggyback express as it sped upgrade through Abo Canyon enroute to Amarillo, Tex. and eventually Chicago. The five unit lash-up is headed by SD45 No. 5688. In 1944 the Santa Fe began to install Centralized Traffic Control on various heavy traffic routes and by 1946 some 520 miles of CTC had been placed in operation, including the Belen Cutoff through Abo Canyon.



Abo Canyon with its 40 mph speed restriction lies just ahead of this freight descending through Scholle. The line crosses the Continental Divide at a much lower elevation than Raton Pass with a maximum elevation of 6,508 ft. and a ruling grade of only .6 percent westbound and 1.25 percent eastbound. The first train operated via the Belen cutoff and through Abo Canyon on December 18, 1907, but with collapse of the eastern money market it was not until June 1908 that regular service commenced.



Autobiography of An Electric Car

**Presented by Rex C. Myers
From the Files of the Montana
Historical Society, Helena**

Streetcars had a charm which captured the imagination of young and old alike. From the day the trolley made its inaugural trip in a city to the sad "last run," riding the cars was an exciting facet of urban life. This magic captivated the interest of a Helena, Mont., high school girl before the turn of the present century. The result was the following selection.

In her "autobiography" of an electric streetcar, Florence J. Scott depicted the life of a Helena single-truck trolley during the 1890's. The subject of Miss Scott's affection was an unidentified closed car, probably No. 8, 9 or 10, which began service as part of the Helena Electric Railway Company's equipment roster in 1890, and was scrapped in the 1920's.

Col. C. A. Broadwater's Hotel and Natatorium was a lavish resort located three miles

west of Helena. It opened in August of 1889 and at its height enjoyed service from two street railway lines — Broadwater's own Helena Electric, and the competing Helena, Hot Springs & Smelter Railroad. A successor to both companies — the Helena Power & Light Company — constructed a branch line north of Helena to the University and Forestvale Cemetery in 1894. The line proved unprofitable and was abandoned in 1899.

Helena's entire street railway system succumbed to "progress" and buses in 1928, as did many lines throughout the nation during that era. For those who enjoy the memories of trolley cars and that special "something" they brought to life, please join Florence Scott as she recounts "The Autobiography of An Electric Car."

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN ELECTRIC CAR

By

Florence J. Scott. Published in
Helena, Mont., High School's *The
Nugget*, 1898, pp. 17-18.

I was born in Minneapolis, Minn., I do not know how long ago. I remember nothing that happened there, for I was immediately freighted to Helena.

What a gay, handsome, young car I was in those days. My sides were painted yellow, with red trimmings. "Helena Electric Company" was painted in large gilt letter on each side. My



Montana Historical Society

About three miles to the west of Helena and reached by the Helena Electric Railway Company was the lavish Broadwater Hotel and Natatorium. For a ten-cent ride on the trolley and a 50-cent fee at Broadwater's a rheumatism sufferer could bathe in natural mineral water of 100 degrees. In 1893 you could stay at the hotel for \$4 to \$6 per day, American Plan.

brake levers were of new, shining brass. My bell tinkled merrily, whenever the rope was pulled. My seats were covered with bright, new, velvet carpets. Take it all in all, I was a very handsome car, indeed.

How well I remember my first day. The air was clear and cold. My route was between the Broadwater and the city. All day long I carried merry parties of boys and girls out to the skating pond. How gay and care-free they all were, laughing, singing and joking one another! In the evening I carried young men and women to the pond. They, too, seemed to be gay; but their laughter did not seem to be so ringing or so happy as that of the boys and girls. . . .

But my passengers were not all skaters. Staid businessmen and motherly women used to ride on me, frequently. Some of the women, I could not help loving, but how I hated others, who were cross to my pilot, or slammed my doors!

In the summer I had just as jolly a time as in the winter. Then I carried girls and boys, young men and maidens, old men and matrons to the Natatorium. What fun there was in the plunge, I could only guess, as I heard the laughter and shouts, as I passed. Often, in the evening, parties had luncheon on my velvet cushions and left many a grease spot on my floor; nevertheless I enjoyed every minute that those parties were with me — indeed, those were happy days. . . .

After many, many years in this service, I began to feel old. My wheels began to creak; my joints

ached with rheumatism, and my bell sounded as if it had a cold. But I was not ashamed of my age. I had been faithful, and had earned the rest, which I soon enjoyed.

I was put away in the car barns. At first, I was very happy, but after awhile the quiet became monotonous. I no longer saw what was going on, and I missed my passengers. Indeed, I was dead to the world. . . .

But one day, my stable door was opened, and I was taken out. I was sent to the paint shop, and got a fresh coat, and my hinges were freshly oiled. Then I was put upon the University line. Gay parties of college students now were my most frequent passengers. I seemed to grow younger again, as I listened to their nonsense. But, sometimes I carried funeral parties to the cemetery. How sad I then felt! . . .

I do not know how long I would have run on this line, if I had not had a dreadful accident. A young pilot undertook to run me one night. Just as we reached a bad spot in the road, something broke, and my pilot was unable to gain control of me. Off I went, over the bank. I lay on the ground all night, and in the morning, when men came to lift me up, they found me too badly injured to be repaired. I was hauled to town and left outside of the stable. Here I am yet, where I expect to remain the rest of my days. My paint is all washed off by the rain. My brake levers and bell have been taken off; and I am, indeed, a sad contrast to the car that first came to Helena.



Montana Historical Society

Ah! Off to Col. Broadwater's Mineral Baths. This car is probably No. 8, 9 or 10, which began service in 1890 and were scrapped in the 1920's. It is very likely the trolley described by young Florence J. Scott when she wrote the *Autobiography of an Electric Car*. In 1905 the Helena Light & Railway Company succeeded the Helena Light & Traction Company. It operated 23.5 miles of track with 19 motor cars and three trailers.



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John Lochhead

*Editor's Note: This article appeared in the March, 1948 issue of **The Tiller**, a short-lived publication devoted to items of maritime interest. We hope to reprint other portions of this series from time-to-time. Members are requested to supply photographs to illustrate such operations as: North Sydney, N.S. — Newfoundland; St. John, N.B. — Digby, N.S.; Norfolk — Pinner's Point, Va.; New York — Fall River, Mass.; Newport News — Norfolk (C&O).*

The proposal of the New York, Philadelphia & Norfolk Railroad in 1884 to connect New York and Norfolk by constructing a railroad down the Eastern Shore peninsula of Virginia and operating a transfer service across thirty-six miles of Chesapeake Bay to Norfolk was branded "impractical" and "preposterous." It was acknowledged that the flatness of the Eastern Shore was ideal for railroad construction and that passengers could be easily transported over the Bay by steamer. But for tugs to tow barges of loaded freight cars across the Bay was something else again, especially when northeast storms drove heavy seas in from the Atlantic between Cape Henry and Cape Charles, and a northerly wind swept the entire length of the Bay. A fresh wind from the southwest was not to be ignored, nor the dangers of fog. Car floats were in service for short hauls around harbors, but they had never been used for such a long haul as the NYP&N proposed to make. Loading and unloading them at the various railroads in Norfolk was a problem, too.

Nevertheless the company, which had been promoted by the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore Railroad Company, started construction in the spring of 1884 at a point north of Pocomoke, Maryland, and at sunset on October 25, 1884, "amid the hooting of owls and the croaking of frogs" the last spike was driven in the railroad that ended in a cornfield beside a brackish pond, the site of Cape Charles City and its harbor.

It is difficult to realize that at this time Cape Charles City was largely a vision in the mind of Mr. William L. Scott who had located a town beside the railroad on the farmland of the old Tazewell estate, divided it into 644 lots measuring 140 x 40 and named it "Cape Charles." Seven avenues were laid out running east and west named for governors of Virginia, and streets running north and south were named for fruits — Strawberry, Peach, Pine, Plum, Nectarine, and Fig. Several business men bought lots and a hotel was proposed. The pioneers visualized a town of 5000 in a few years, and since the town was directly on the route of vessels plying between Washington and Baltimore to New York, Philadelphia and Norfolk, a busy port seemed reasonable.

Dredgers converted to a harbor the pond which sometimes burst its bonds during heavy rains and flowed into the Chesapeake. A channel connecting the harbor to the Bay was dug and on Nov. 17, 1884, the side-wheel steamer **Jane Moseley**, Capt. Sam Martin, chartered from the Norfolk and Washington line, inaugurated service between Cape Charles City and Norfolk. On

WHEN THE RAILROAD ENDS
AT THE SHORE LINE, THE
TIMETABLES SHOW

The Boat Trains

John L. Lochhead

her return trip from Norfolk she sailed with a passenger list of sixteen. She carried freight, though hardly the amount the company planned to carry on the wooden carfloat it was building.

It was not until nearly four months later, on March 12, 1885, that the tug **Norfolk** towing Car Float No. 1 with a capacity of twelve cars arrived in Norfolk on her first trip from Cape Charles. The company must have watched their arrivals and departures with anxiety. This mode of handling freight cars proved practical, however, for a month later freight shipments had increased so steadily that the company was already planning construction of additional car floats.

One indication that the public quickly acknowledged the railroad was its early acquisition of a nickname. At first it was called the "Nyp" road, but this gave way to "Nip 'n 'En" — NYP&N — and it is still called that locally.

The success of the new road was evidenced as early as December 1884 by the alarm of the water transportation companies plying between Norfolk and the North who called a meeting at Philadelphia to discuss pooling all their business as protection against the NYP&N. They reached no agreement, however.

The handling of passenger traffic which at first appeared to offer few problems to the steamers of the NYP&N did not turn out as expected. On Dec. 22, 1884, shortly after leaving the wharf at Cape Charles City, the **Jane Moseley** struck an anchor used in dredging operations and sank in nine feet of water. She was raised the next day and proceeded to Norfolk for repairs, being

replaced for a week by the **Eastern Shore**.

Meanwhile the company was constructing a side-wheeler of their own, and on March 27, 1885, the **Cape Charles**, built by Harlan & Hollingsworth at Wilmington, Delaware, left Cape Charles for Norfolk on her first trip. She was glowingly reported as capable of twenty miles an hour speed and as the first vessel on the Bay to be equipped with electric lights and steam steering gear. Her deck could accommodate under cover four Pullman cars, and it was hoped to provide through Pullman service via the other southern railroads from New York to Jacksonville.

The project was a failure, and she soon ceased to carry Pullmans. The reasons given were various: Pullman traffic was too light; connections did not turn out as expected; the southern railroads refused to handle the Pullmans; the vessel was too expensive to operate.

The **Cape Charles** continued to operate when the **Old Point Comfort**, another side-wheeler built expressly for the line by Harlan & Hollingsworth, was placed in service March 18, 1886. The **Old Point** was a smaller steamer, measuring 643.99 tons gross, 176 x 31 x 10, and she had no tracks for railroad cars. The **Cape Charles** connected with the night express and the **Old Point** was assigned to connect with the day train for New York.

This arrangement continued in effect until fall when the NYP&N inaugurated on Nov. 1, 1886, a service between Cape Charles City and Richmond, Virginia, using the **Old Point Comfort**. The line had every indication of being successful for the Cape Charles paper on April 5, 1887,



John Lochhead

Top, the Pennsylvania Railroad's graceful *Maryland* glides towards Cape Charles, Va. in this 1940's photo. The 1,369-ton twin screw passenger steamer was built for the New York, Philadelphia & Norfolk Railroad in 1907 and was retained until 1950 by the PRR. Above, probably the best known Pennsy steamer in recent times was the 2,906-ton twin screw *Elisha Lee* which was the former *Richard Peck* acquired during World War II from the Fall River Line (a NYNH&H subsidiary). *Elisha Lee* was a vice president and director of the PRR from 1925 to 1933. All PRR steamers in this service were based at Norfolk, Va., and the *Elisha Lee* made her last trip in February, 1953.



Member Cecil Davey was probably standing on the deck of the *Elisha Lee* when he photographed the K4-powered *Del-Mar-Va Express* at its final station stop in Cape Charles, Va. (See also photo Page 18). Mainland Virginia is 20 to 30 miles distant across Chesapeake Bay. The PRR, which had promoted construction of the NYP&N, gained control of the line about 1909, then leased the road in 1920 to absorb its operation into the Delmarva Division

described the **Old Point** as "loaded down to the guards" with freight from Richmond and supposed the railroad would put another boat on the line owing to the amount of business.

The railroad did put another boat on the line the **Samuel M. Felton** chartered from the Delaware River, but this was just to replace the **Old Point** which had shifted to the Norfolk-Cape Charles run while the **Cape Charles** was being overhauled. When the **Old Point** had her spring overhaul, the **Felton** substituted for her on the Cape Charles-Norfolk run, the Richmond line having been abandoned abruptly on April 23 despite the apparent good freight. The reason given was that under the interstate commerce law the all-water routes could ship from Richmond to Philadelphia and New York at lower rates than the railroad.

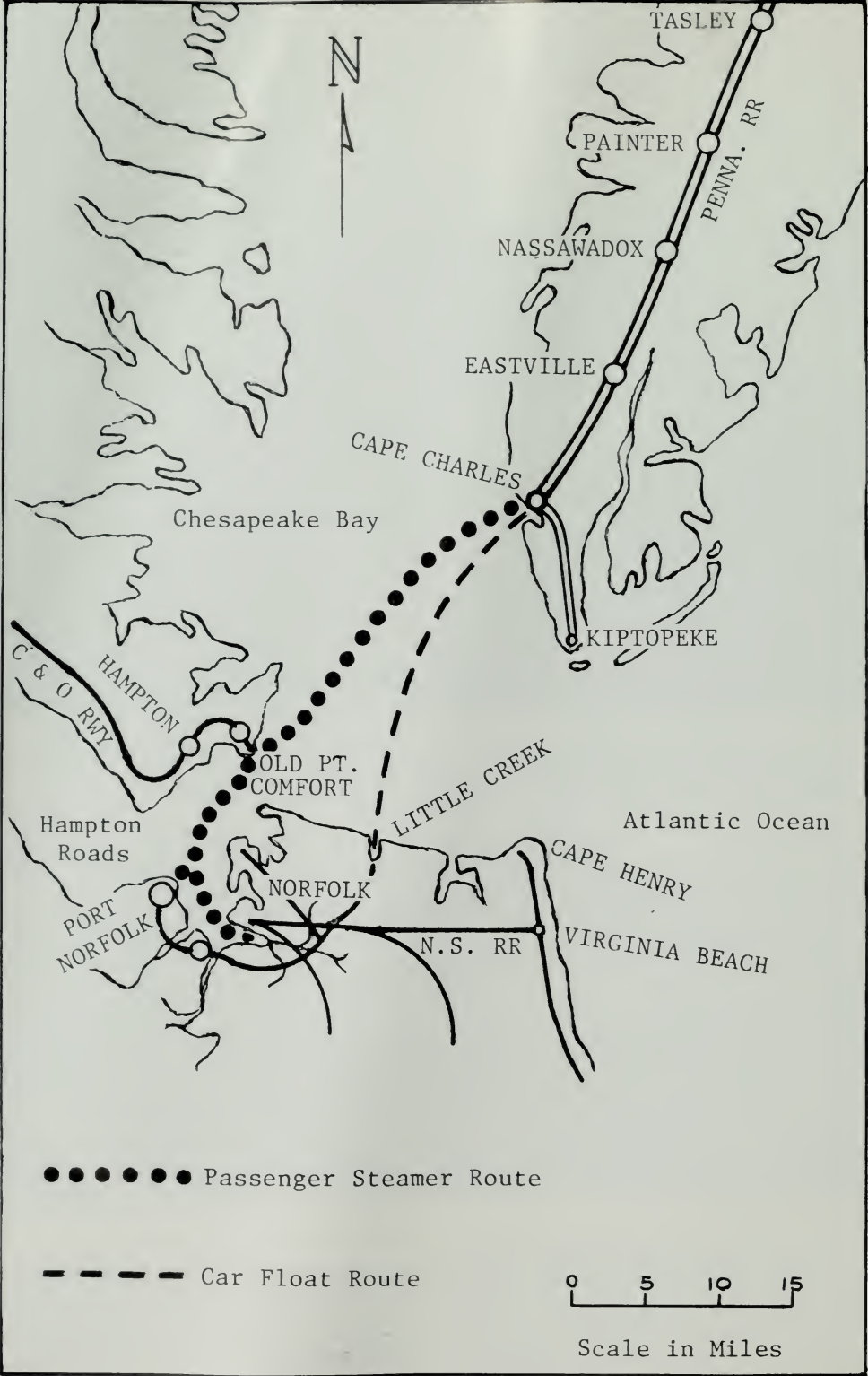
A more successful expansion of service apparently was the NYP&N's arrangement with the Norfolk & Southern Railroad by which freight cars were run to Elizabeth City, North Carolina, where shipments were transferred to small steamers operating on North Carolina sounds and rivers. This gave the NYP&N a through service from Boston to North Carolina markets and offered serious competition to the steamers of

the Clyde Line and the Old Dominion Line engaged in that trade.

The new railroad tried to expand in still another direction. It proposed as soon as the **Cape Charles** was restored to service to place the **Old Point** on a route to the Western Shore of the Chesapeake which had no rail facilities and might feed the line with a great amount of truck. The plan never went into effect, however, because the **Cape Charles** was chartered for New York harbor excursion trade, running to Long Branch, New Jersey, and was later sold there.

The **Old Point Comfort** continued alone, operating at half the expense of the "fire eater," as the **Cape Charles** was dubbed, until the company built the **New York**, its first propeller, measuring 785.24 tons gross, 207 x 31.1 x 12.6. A service of two trips a day was again established on November 11, 1889, between Cape Charles, Old Point Comfort and Norfolk.

It comes as somewhat of a surprise to those now accustomed to the white boats of the company with their buff and black band stacks to learn that in 1892 the superstructures of the **Old Point** and the **New York** were painted red, the railings and hulls "Pennsylvania Railroad water-tank green."



VIRGINIA FERRY CORPORATION, CAPE CHARLES AND NORFOLK, VIA LITTLE CREEK
(Via bus between Norfolk and Little Creek—see complete information other site.)

NOTE—Sleeping cars may be occupied until 10:00 A. M. at Cape Charles. Passengers may take steamers and bus of Virginia Ferry Corporation (see schedules above). Tickets good in sleeping car will be honored via this route on application to Ticket Agent at Cape Charles. (For combination coach-Pullman tickets, a slight additional charge will be made.)

to a point nearly seven miles from Hemgar's Creek where the mate of the **New York** walked ashore over the ice and telegraphed for help. Tugs No. 1 and No. 2 of the Norfolk & Western Railroad finally brought the **New York** back to Norfolk where she was quickly repaired and returned to service. The wooden buckets of the **Old Point's** paddle wheels were no match for the ice when she tried to follow in the path the propeller **New York** broke through the ice, and she

Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily
A.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.
1.30	2.00	2.55	4.00	5.30	7.00	8.30	10.00
12.30	2.00	3.30	4.00	5.30	7.00	9.30	11.00
2.15	3.45	5.15	6.45	8.15	9.45	11.15	12.45
P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.

9.30 P.M. Pullman passengers desiring to retire earlier than the schedule above. Tickets good in sleeping cars will read C of Ticket Office or the Agent at Brooke Avenue.

* 25¢ additional charge will be made if

Through Daily Sleeping Car between NEW YORK and NORFOLK			
Read Down	via (Richmond)	Read Up	
No. 151	Pennsylvania Railroad	No. 22	108
12 15	New York (Ponca Sta.) N. Y.	12 15	6
12 15	New York (Hudson Term.) N. Y.	12 15	6
12 47	Newark, N. J.	12 47	6
2 22	North Philadelphia, Pa.	5 07	6
2 22	Philadelphia (30th St.) Pa.	5 48	6
3 13	Baltimore, Md.	7 21	6
4 30	Baltimore, Md.	8 51	6
5 15	Washington, D. C.	10 10	6
5 35	Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac R. R.	12 10	6
5 35	Washington, D. C.	12 10	6
8 15	Richmond, Va.	10 20	6
No. 29	Atlantic Coast Line R. R.	No. 29	78
8 30	Richmond, Va.	10 05	78
9 15	Petersburg, Va.	10 21	78
No. 22	Norfolk & Western Rwy.	No. 21	78
9 15	Petersburg, Va.	10 21	78
10 55	Norfolk, Va.	7 40	78

The time from 12:01 A. M. to 12:00 clock noon, inclusive, is indicated by light-face type; from 12:01 to 12:00 clock, midnight, inclusive, by dark-face type.

ADJUSTMENT OF FARES.—Should any misunderstanding arise between the conductors of agents as to the proper fare or ticket privileges, please may be requested, take receipt and communicate with General Passenger Agent, Pennsylvania Station, Philadelphia 4, Pa.

CHILDREN Under 5 years of age, free, when accompanied by parent or guardian. 5 years of age and under 12, one-half fare.

RESPONSIBILITY The Pennsylvania Railroad is not responsible for error in time tables, nor for inconvenience or damage resulting from delayed trains or failure to make connections. The times shown in this time table are subject to change without notice.

FORWARDING OF BAGGAGE Passengers are urged to check baggage in advance of departure. The railroad is not responsible for baggage left on a train. Every effort will be made to facilitate the handling of baggage, but the Railroad cannot guarantee the forwarding of baggage on same train as that of arrival at destination. Baggage checked is guaranteed.

New York, N. Y. telephone
 Pullman Reservations Pennsylvania 6-2000
 Information Bureau Pennsylvania 6-5000
 100 West 42nd Street Wisconsin 7-6000
 4 West Thirty-Third Street Pennsylvania 6-0748
 17 John Street Barclay 7-6000
 Travel Service Penna. Ste. PEuniversity 6-7600

Brooklyn, N. Y.
 166 Pierrepont Street Triangle 8-7440

Newark, N. J.
 Pullman Reservations Market 2-5000
 20 Commercial Street Market 2-6000

Philadelphia, Pa.
 Pullman Reservations EVERgreen 3000
 1417 Chestnut Street EVERgreen 1000
 119 South Ninth Street WALnut 6500

Wilmington, Del.
 Pullman Reservations 3-4141
 914 Market Street 7-7281

Baltimore, Md.
 Pullman Reservations MUlberry 8100
 Baltimore and Light Streets PLAss 5430

Washington, D. C.
 Pullman Reservations EXecutive 4300
 Pullman Reservations EXecutive 7600
 695 14th Street, N. W. EXecutive 5600

F. M. Ware, General Passenger Agent,
Pennsylvania Station, (30th St.)
Philadelphia 4, Pa.

E. R. Comer, General Passenger Agent,
Pennsylvania Station, New York 1, N. Y.
W. L. Wright, Jr., District Passenger Agent
Royer Bldg., Granby Street & City Hall
Avenue, Norfolk 10, Va.
W. N. Pippin, Division Passenger Agent,
Delaware Trust Bldg., 914 Market Street,
Wilmington 38, Del.

Collection of W. C. Wagner

The **Pennsylvania** of 1900 was a graceful, two-

funnelled steamer whose dimensions were 1352 tons gross, 244.3 x 40 x 10. She was a product of the Delaware River Company, Chester, Pa. Like the **Cape Charles** of 1898 she was painted white, and to match their new running mate the **New York** and the **Old Point Comfort** shed their red paint. The **Pennsylvania** was termed the "fastest inland steamer," capable of twenty-two miles an hour, a statement her rivals on Long Island Sound probably disputed. When this vessel was sent to Baltimore in 1922 for renovation, she reappeared in November with a single stack and resembled the **Maryland** of 1907. Her trial trip in November 1922 was the occasion of a special cruise from Baltimore to Norfolk where the guests stayed overnight in hotels and then resumed their trip next morning proceeding to Clarendon, Virginia, on the James River, probably the first time a NYP&N boat had sailed the James since the **Felton** abandoned the Richmond service in 1887. After a stop at Clarendon, the **Pennsylvania** steamed down the river for Cape Charles.

The **Maryland**, built in 1907, of 1369 tons gross, 249.6 x 39.10 x 10 replaced the **New York** which became the relief boat of the service, the **Old Point** being sold to the B.C.&A. — the Baltimore, Chesapeake & Atlantic, a company better known to steamboat men as "the Before Christ & After." The **Maryland** was the last steamer built for twenty-one years, or until the **Virginia Lee** was delivered to the company in 1928 by Bethlehem Shipbuilding Company, Quincy, Massachusetts. She measured 2158 tons; 291 x 50.1 x 16.5.

World War II brought a great change in the company. More than one employee probably looks back on those days and wonders how he survived, and how the steamers, trains, tugs, and car floats managed to carry the tremendous burden of passengers and freight that strained all facilities to the utmost.

In July 1942 the Government requisitioned the most modern of the company's steamers, the **Virginia Lee**. As the old **Pennsylvania** had been sold in August 1940 for scrap there was no relief boat. So the **Del-Mar-Va** was transferred from the Little Creek run leaving the **Pocahontas** and the **Princess Anne** to carry a schedule which in the summer called for three ships, an arrangement which left both lines short of a relief boat should anything happen to the steamers in service.

Early in 1944 the newspapers announced a "new" boat, the **Elisha Lee**, would be placed on the Cape Charles-Old Point-Norfolk run. She

was the former **Richard Peck**, a fifty two-year old Long Island Sound liner that had just returned from duty as a barracks ship in Newfoundland. Though the adjective "new" seemed inappropriate, any boat that would float and help ease the traffic jam was welcome. Wartime passenger travel had skyrocketed due to the vast number of Army and Navy activities in the Hampton Roads area. The **Elisha Lee** began service March 17, 1944, and from the start both the public and company found her a welcome addition. Despite her years she was a fast boat, beating all her rivals in the Cape Charles service. Many of her inside staterooms had been removed so that she was roomy. Even so, there were trips when space on the **Elisha Lee** was at a premium. This is not hard to believe when confronted with the fact that the steamers carried 1,104,600 passengers during 1944, more than double the figure for 1942 and almost double the highest figure during the First World War. After the Christmas rush in 1944, when it was estimated there was a crowd of 3000 on the wharf at one time, it was discovered that one section of the pier had settled twenty-four inches.

The wartime crowds now seem like a bad dream. Passengers no longer dash pell-mell from the steamer to the train in dread of having to stand the entire seven-hour train trip to New York.

In November 1947 the **Elisha Lee** alone was handling the entire schedule, making two round trips a day. Her span of years is only eight years short of the railroad's, and harks back almost to the time when the NYP&N finally reached the cornfield, where, on the shores of Chesapeake Bay, Cape Charles City now stands.

* * * * *

The Jane Moseley became the Minerva in New York excursion trade and was abandoned in 1932. The Cape Charles (1885) became a dredge owned by Gulf & Ship Island R.R. Co. and appeared in ship registers until 1918. The Old Point Comfort burned at Baltimore Aug. 22, 1920. As the barge Richmond Cedar Works No. 5 she lasted until 1936. The New York went to New York and burned July 18, 1932 in Fresh Kills Creek, Staten Island. The Elisha Lee was featured on The Tiller, August 1946, and the Cape Charles (1898) in The Tiller, March 1947. The Virginia Lee has been the subject of conflicting stories. The latest report is that the Nantasket Line of Boston bought her for its Boston and Provincetown Line and in the fall of 1947 sent a crew to the Amazon, where she plied during the war, to bring her back to Boston.

RAIL AND WATER SERVICE ON THE LOWER DELMARVA 1947-1978

Samuel L. James

After 1947 passenger service on the Pennsylvania Railroad's Delmarva Division was gradually whittled down so that by 1950 the only service into Cape Charles, Va. was the daytime **Del-Mar-Va Express**, the night train **Cavalier**,

and a daytime mail and express train which carried no passengers. Also on the schedule was the Sunday-only southbound **Furlough**, appropriately named for the heavy Navy furlough traffic it handled.

On February 28, 1953 the Cape Charles-Norfolk Ferry connection was discontinued. Thereafter patronage dropped drastically as the railroad no doubt hoped it would, and a Carolina Trailways bus met the trains to transport passengers to Trailways' Norfolk Terminal via the Kiptopeke-Little Creek auto ferry. A footnote in the Delmarva Division public timetable noted this connection but did not give the schedules. By the end of April 1955 the bus connection was gone.

At the end of April 1953 the **Furlough** was gone too, as was the mail and express train. In December 1955 the **Cavalier** became coach only and four months later was discontinued except for a state line franchise run because permission for discontinuance had not been received from Virginia state authorities. This run lasted just two months, leaving the **Del-Mar-Va Express** as the sole passenger train on the peninsula.

The only thing keeping Nos. 454 and 455 on the timetable was the Phila. & Cape Charles R.P.O., with its motor truck connection between Cape Charles and Norfolk. This minimal service lasted until early 1958 when the sad remains of the **Del-Mar-Va Express** were finally dropped, ending all passenger service south of Delmar, Del.

In 1942 the War Shipping Administration requisitioned the pride of the PRR's Chesapeake Bay fleet, the S.S. **Virginia Lee**, for service in South America. This left the railroad with only the aged S.S. **Maryland** and no spare boat. Because wartime traffic had resulted in enormous loads, acquisition of another boat was imperative. This was accomplished in late 1943 when the railroad purchased the veteran Long Island Sound steamer S.S. **Richard Peck**, built in 1892. Promptly refurbished, she was placed in service in March 1944 and renamed the S.S. **Elisha Lee** after a deceased former vice president of the railroad. She proved both fast and dependable in spite of her 50-plus years, making two round trips daily between Cape Charles, Old Point Comfort and Norfolk in connection with Delmarva Division passenger trains.

By 1948 rapidly declining passenger traffic required only one boat so the veteran **Maryland** was placed in reserve until 1950 when she was sold to the scrappers. By this time the railroad was finding it quite expensive to keep such an old boat as the **Elisha Lee** in operation and meet Coast Guard requirements. The railroad hierarchy in Philadelphia obviously realized that the repairs needed to pass the Coast Guard inspection due March 1, 1953 were not economically justified.

So on the evening of February 28, 1953 the **Elisha Lee** made her final trip from Norfolk to Cape Charles for the **Cavalier** connection. She immediately deadheaded back to Norfolk and was laid up in a local shipyard, ending 69 years of continuous railroad passenger ferry service across lower Chesapeake Bay.

The PRR, however, had ended service without official permission, which created a furor among the local populace. Nevertheless, the railroad resisted all efforts to resume the service, which resulted in a court-ordered fine for terminating service without permission. After many months

of layup the **Elisha Lee** was towed to a Baltimore scrapyard and cut up in 1954.

One other railroad-related passenger ferry which operated into Cape Charles was a once-a-week connection for the **Furlough**. This service was maintained by a Virginia Ferry Corp. auto ferry which operated to the Little Creek terminal east of Norfolk, with a bus connection to the city. Interestingly enough, the boat often used on this run was the M.V. **Accomac** — none other than the former railroad steamer **Virginia Lee** which was converted into a diesel auto ferry by VFC after the war!

* * * * *

The Pennsylvania's tug fleet was virtually renewed after World War II, with the purchase of five surplus U.S. Army ocean-going steam tugs. All were named after towns on the Delmarva Peninsula. In 1948 the last new carfloat was purchased, the **Captain Richardson**. In the late 1950's the railroad decided to de-emphasize its rail service via the "Cape Charles Route", causing a gradual decline in volume of cars handled via the carfloats. No doubt this was an expensive operation and with the deteriorating service highway truckers were capturing more and more of the Delmarva rail traffic.

By the mid-60's the traffic had dropped sufficiently that the remaining steam tug fleet could be sold to the scrappers and replaced by the diesel tugs **Chicago** and **Philadelphia** from the Pennsy's New York Harbor fleet. While these modern tugs, built in the 1950's, were designed for New York Harbor service they adopted satisfactorily to the open waters of the 26-mile Chesapeake Bay crossing.

Penn Central virtually abandoned this route and by the time of Conrail's creation in 1976 the service was down to one tug and one float making a few trips a week. On April 1, 1977 the operation was taken over by a new shortline, the Virginia & Maryland Railroad, which is now making a concerted effort to revive the route. V & M has contracted the carfloat operation to Portside Marine, Inc. which operates daily service using the two ex-PRR tugs, the float **Captain Richardson** and another float recently purchased from the Chessie System.

With state backing, subsidy and vastly improved service via the V&M's "Delmarva Route", the future looks bright for this service. So if you find yourself in the Cape Charles-Little Creek area of Virginia, stop by and see the last surviving example of long-distance marine railroading on the U.S. East Coast.



The

ST. FRANCIS BASIN PROJECT

of the

Cotton Belt Route

Recent abandonments of St. Louis Southwestern Railway (Cotton Belt Route) branch lines in northeastern Arkansas and southeastern Missouri have brought to a finale the ambitious but ill-fated "Memphis short-cut" that the railroad developed in 1928-1930. Known formally as the St. Francis Basin Project, this line was aimed at significantly shortening the rail distance between St. Louis and Memphis. Another objective of the new route was to exploit business opportunities offered by the rich agricultural resources of what had earlier been the swampy "sunk lands" of the region.

Under the guidance of Daniel Upthegrove, who assumed the Cotton Belt presidency in 1922, a system-wide rehabilitation program on the railroad was nearing its end in 1928.¹ At this point, plans for the Basin Project were developed and given prompt management approval. The concept was to connect Malden, a Missouri station on the Cotton Belt main line, with Memphis by a route that would include a combination of purchased short lines, rights over trackage of other companies, and newly-constructed line. The route mileage would be 125 compared with the then-current mileage through Brinkley, Ark., of 210.7. A shorter freight haul would make the Cotton Belt quite competitive with its regional rivals.

<u>Railroad</u>	St. Louis — Memphis (miles)
St. Louis-San Francisco (Frisco) . . .	306
Missouri Pacific	345
Illinois Central	316
Cotton Belt — existing	411
Cotton Belt — proposed new line . . .	325

Thus, it made good business sense to become more competitive in the Memphis gateway freight business. And the rich lands of the region, now drained from the inundation caused by the New Madrid earthquake of 1811-12, promised to provide much revenue in the form of

logs, wood products, cotton and other products. Although the region was already criss-crossed by branch lines of the Frisco, there seemed to be enough business potential to support another operator.

On July 30, 1928 the Cotton Belt filed an application with the Interstate Commerce Commission to assemble the northern half of the Memphis line.² The plan called for the purchase of three shortlines, the Gideon & North Island, the Deering Southwestern, and the Blytheville, Leachville & Arkansas Southern, and the construction of connecting links between them. As Figure 1 shows, this would provide a more-or-less direct route south from Malden to Rivervale, Ark., and would complete about 60 percent of the projected mileage to Memphis. Just how the line would proceed south from Rivervale, a small lumbering town, was not stated in the application. Memphis could be reached by trackage rights over the Frisco (requiring a short five-mile connection) or by new construction, roughly paralleling the Frisco.

The northernmost shortline, the Gideon & North Island, was incorporated April 30, 1908 in Missouri. It extended 15 miles south of Malden and operated primarily to haul logs to the lumber mill of its parent, the Gideon & Anderson Lumber and Mercantile Company, and by 1928 was facing the end of source timber for the mill. The Cotton Belt was offered the line for \$80,000, in a run-down state, and was also offered at a good price much of the land needed for the northernmost connecting link. The nine miles south from Malden to Gideon would be rebuilt, and the remainder would be abandoned.^{2,3,4}

From Gideon to a point near Deering, Mo., 19.2 miles of new railroad would be built to connect with the Deering Southwestern, a logging line of its parent, the International Harvester Company, and one that had prospered also as a common carrier in the region. Incorporated in



H. K. Vollrath Collection

Motive power assignments on the Cotton Belt's St. Francis line included runs east and west out of Hornersville, Ark. Here, Ten-Wheeler No. 251, a 1910 Baldwin product, takes water at Paragould, Ark. in August 1945. The ambitious but ill-fated "Memphis Short-Cut" was developed during 1928-1930.

Missouri on June 24, 1903, The DSW had good interline connections and enjoyed a fair local business over its 31-mile route from Hornersville to Caruthersville. The cost of this purchase would be \$350,000, with 14.4 miles of the line used for the through route and the remainder for local service only.^{2,5,6}

From Hornersville to Leachville, Ark., 10.4 miles of new railroad would be built to connect with the Blytheville, Leachville & Arkansas Southern (through 0.24 miles of trackage rights over the Frisco at Leachville). The BL&AS was incorporated in Arkansas on May 19, 1908 and served the Blytheville, Ark., mill of its owner, the Chicago Mill & Lumber Company, through trackage rights connections. The main line of the BL&AS, from Leachville to Rivervale, would be used for through service. Extension southward to Lepanto, four miles, would not be difficult.⁷ Actually, the entire main line of the BL&AS followed an old survey of the Frisco from Lepanto to Leachville. The price of the BL&AS, including some trackage at Blytheville and a branch line to Mandalay, would be \$400,000.^{8,9,10}

In summary, the Cotton Belt planned to purchase the shortlines for \$830,000, spend \$503,000 to rehabilitate them, and build connecting links for \$863,000 — a grand total of \$2,196,000.² Approval of this plan came from the ICC on March 14, 1929, and operation of the lines was given ICC approval on November 12 of the same year.¹¹ They were merged into the Cotton Belt system on December 1, 1929 (DSW and BL&AS) and January 1, 1930 (G&NI).¹²

Under the direction of Chief Engineer W. S. Hanley, field construction began in June 1929¹³ and was completed by the end of the year.¹⁴ For both rehabilitation and new construction, engineering standards called for tie-plated 75-pound re-lay rail, creosoted crossies and bridge timbers, and creek gravel ballast. No significant grades were involved and curvature of new routes was minimal. Grading was subcon-

tracted, but tracklaying and bridgework were handled by Cotton Belt forces.

As the stock market crash of October 1929 neared, plans were being made to divert all St. Louis-Memphis tonnage to the new route as soon as it was completed. But difficulties with the Frisco had arisen over trackage into Memphis; understandably, that competitor was not overjoyed by the moves of the Cotton Belt into its territory. Its charges for trackage rights would be excessive.¹⁵ And the cost of building the 50 miles into Memphis, estimated at about \$2 million, would also be unacceptable. A difficult problem had developed.

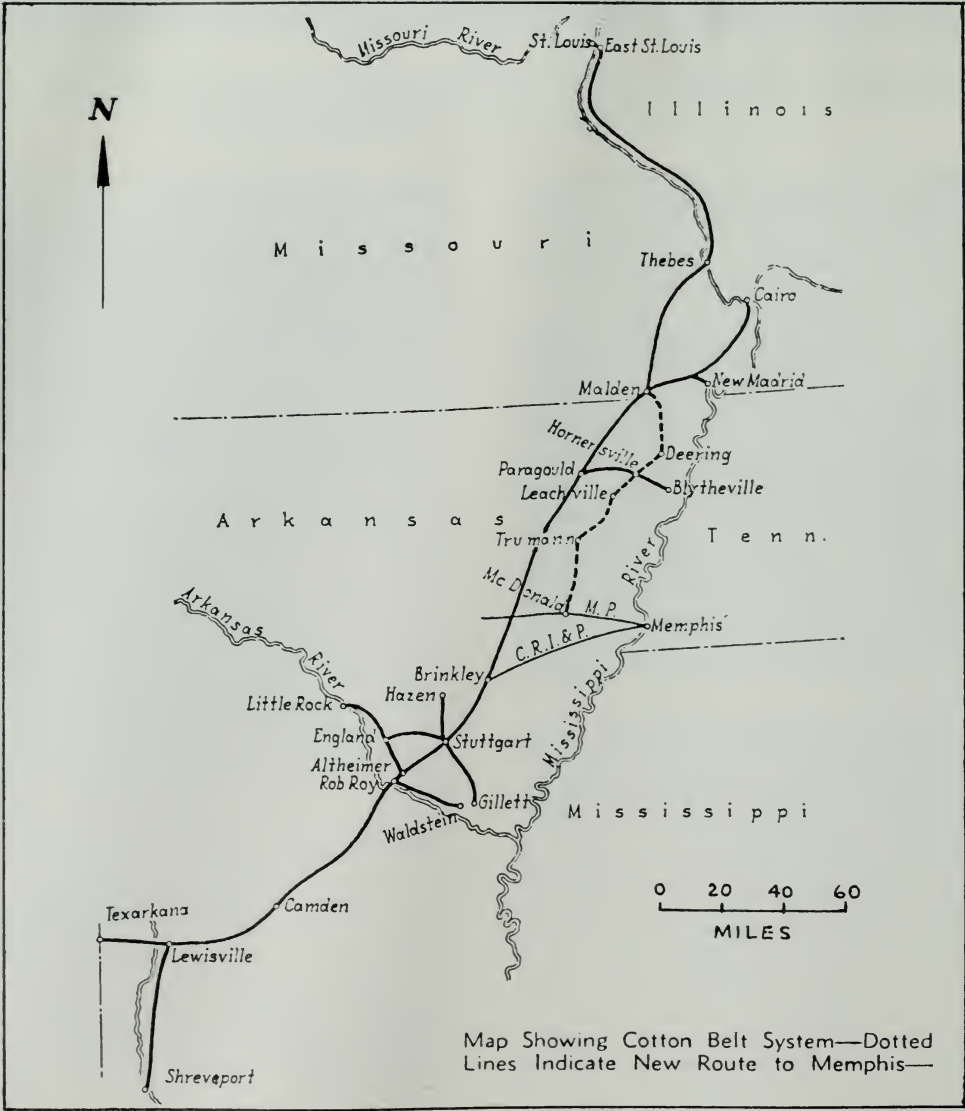
Fortunately, a solution to the problem was identified — one that later proved not to be optimum. It was found possible to deflect the route to the west by building 15.7 miles of new line, to connect at Trumann with non-Frisco trackage for indirect entry to Memphis. An application to the ICC, filed on July 2, 1929, disclosed the plan.¹⁵ The new construction would start at Caraway on the BL&AS, cross the St. Francis River at a relatively narrow section of swamp, and progress to the lumber mill town of Trumann on the Kansas City-Memphis main line of the Frisco. At Trumann, connection would be made with the Arkansas Short Line, a logging road that had been denied interstate carrier status shortly after being chartered on May 17, 1922.¹⁶ The Short Line would be purchased for an undisclosed amount of cash and would provide 31.3 route miles south to a connection with the Little Rock-Memphis line of the Missouri Pacific. From the point of connection, a small town named McDonald, the MP was willing to grant trackage rights into Memphis, a distance of 34.4 miles. Formal approval of this plan was received from the ICC on November 12, 1929¹⁰, but construction and rehabilitation did not begin until June 1930.¹⁷

The Arkansas Short Line was owned by the Poinsett Lumber & Manufacturing Company, a

subsidiary of the Singer Sewing Machine Company, which manufactured cabinets at its large mill at Trumann. Another logging road, the Cairo, Trumann & Southern, ran parallel to the ASL for part of its length. The CT&S supplied logs to the Tschudy Lumber Company and, having been chartered as a common carrier on February 8, 1912, was able to block the granting of similar authority to ASL in 1922. To be able to operate the ASL trackage it was necessary for the Cotton Belt to purchase the CT&S with a plan of abandoning most of it and, in effect, selling a short connecting link back to Tschudy. This was accomplished.

Another problem of interference arose with a shortline named the Manilla Southwestern, which ran from Herman, on the Frisco main line just north of Trumann, some 5.1 miles to Lunsford, a projected station on the new Caraway-Trumann line of the Cotton Belt. Also in this case, it was necessary for the Cotton Belt to purchase the property and then, in due course, to abandon it.^{18 19}

The Caraway-Trumann trackage was built to the same standards as the new lines to the north, and it included a 142-foot steel drawbridge over the St. Francis plus 4,620 feet of trestlework over the swamp. Unfortunately, the same standards



Map Showing Cotton Belt System—Dotted Lines Indicate New Route to Memphis—

James R. Fair, Jr.



H. K. Foltrath Collection

Moguls and Ten-Wheelers were ample steam power for the low-grade St. Francis line. In this photograph 2-6-0 No. 306, Rogers-built in 1901, idles at Trumann, Ark. in September 1938. At Trumann, southbound trains crossed the Frisco mainline at grade and then backed downhill to the depot.

were not observed in rebuilding the Short Line, probably because in late 1930 the Great Depression was making itself felt. The old 60- and 65-pound rail on the ASL was not changed, and little or no new ballast was applied. Construction and rehabilitation was hurried and local schedules as far south as McDonald were posted on October 15, 1930.²⁰

Although segments of the through line had been operating as completed, through service from St. Louis to Memphis did not start until November 10, 1930.²¹ The Jonesboro (Ark.) *Daily Tribune* noted:²²

Col. F. W. Green, vice-president in charge of operations of the St. Louis Southwestern Railway lines, announced inauguration of fast freight service daily on the Cotton Belt's water-level route between St. Louis and Memphis . . . The Cotton Belt completed in record time the rehabilitation of lines purchased and new connecting lines constructed . . . An expenditure of \$4,424,000 was required . . .

The daily freight train was claimed to have a four-hour advantage over the old running time via Brinkley; departure from St. Louis was 8:30 pm and arrival in Memphis was 11:55 pm the following evening.²³ Supplemental local freight service included thrice-weekly mixed train accommodations into Memphis, the passengers being carried in an elongated caboose.^{24 25}

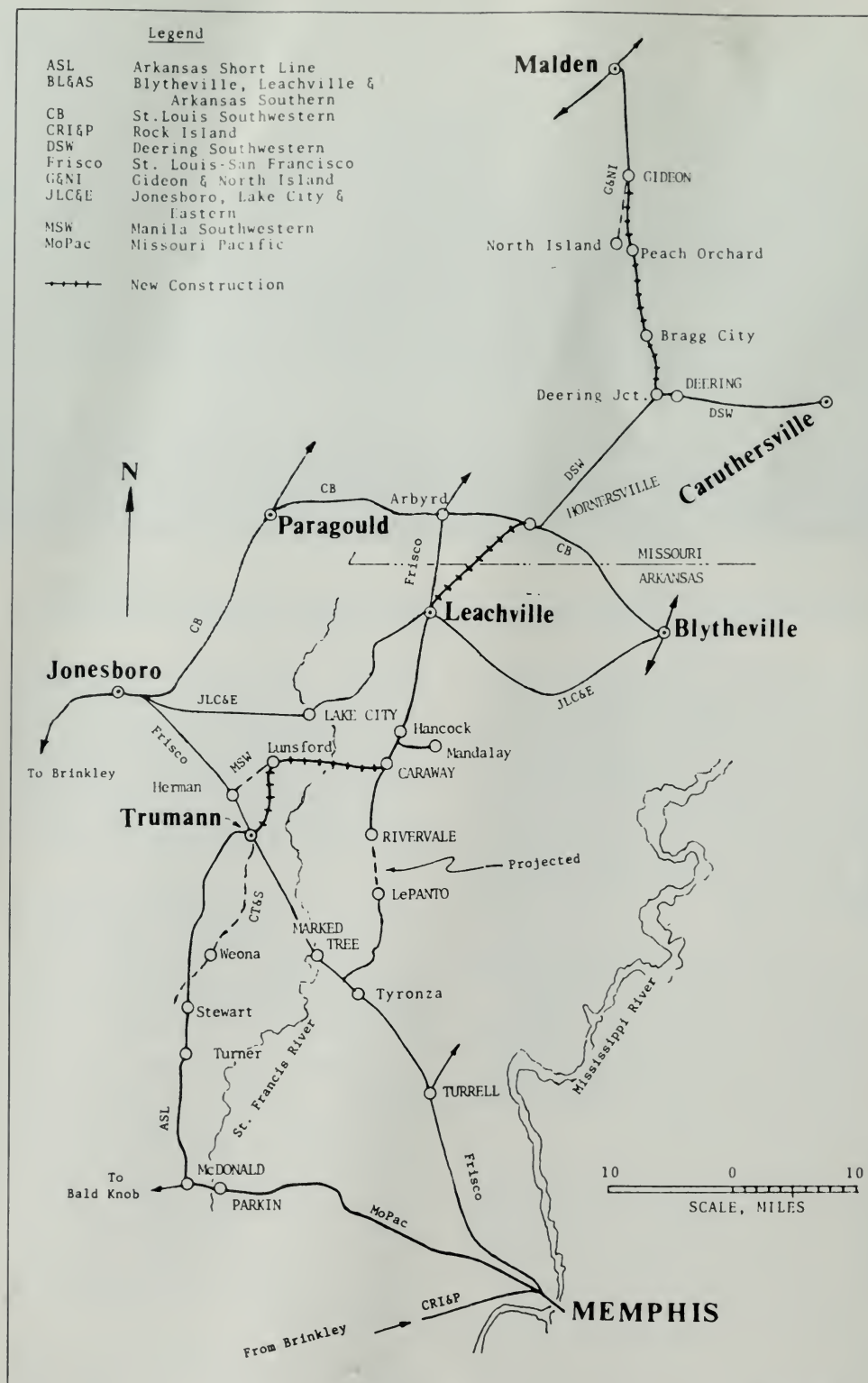
In 1931, the Cotton Belt made significant improvements in its mainline freight schedules, introducing the *Blue Streak Merchandise* with extra-fast running time between St. Louis and

Brinkley.²⁶ And by this time it was painfully evident that the hodge-podge of trackage on the "cutoff" simply would not permit the fast movement of freight trains. (This was especially the case on the former ASL between Trumann and McDonald, where rehabilitation work had been entirely inadequate.) The through freight train was dropped in 1933 and locals were substituted on a rather relaxed schedule that called for average speeds of 7 to 12 miles per hour.

By 1934 it was clear that the cutoff was not paying its way, and on November 9 of that year the Missouri Pacific was notified that the trackage between McDonald and Memphis was no longer needed. The December 31, 1934 schedule showed discontinuance of trains into Memphis. The ICC finally permitted termination of the trackage rights on March 3, 1936.²⁷

The second link to be broken was the abandonment of the old ASL from Trumann to McDonald. Interchange with MP at the south end was very light, and business on that section just dwindled away. In 1944 high water required spending \$31,100 to repair the track and in 1945 the line was again flooded. By early 1945 only one train a week was being operated — with very few revenue cars. The last logs moved were in 1943; the last date for Missouri Pacific interchange was April 9 of that year. Accordingly, on October 1, 1945 the Cotton Belt applied to the ICC for abandonment, and it was granted on December 7, 1945.²⁴

From 1946 to 1972, operations on the now-severed cutoff settled into a certain routine. Trumann, on the south end, supplied a fair



James R. Fair, Jr.



James R. Fair, Jr.

Above, the author photographed Agent G. D. Melton in his office at Trumann, Ark. in August 1971. The Trumann agency was the last on the south end of the St. Francis line. Service ended just one year later, on August 7, 1972. Below, a view south along St. Francis line at Leachville, Ark. in August 1971. Frisco depot in foreground was used jointly by the Cotton Belt in more recent times. Earlier, the SSW had used its own depot, still standing and visible in the background.





Malden, Deering, Caruthersville, Leachville Caraway, Trumann, McDonald, Memphis			
No. 393 Mixed Mon. Wed. Fri.	Miles from St. Louis	Table No. 3	No. 394 Mixed Tues. Thur. Sat.
6 30 AM 17 10 AM 9 20 AM	197 0 204.5 224 3	Lv. Malden Ar Ar. Gideon Lv Ar. Deering Lv	12 20 PM 11.40 AM 9 25 AM
No. 392		Mixed Daily Except Sunday	No. 391
9 20 AM 10 05 AM	224 3 237 7	Lv. Deering Ar Ar. Caruthersville Lv	11 15 AM 10 30 AM
9 20 AM 10 10 AM 11 00 AM	224 3 233 1 240 1	Lv. Deering Ar Rives Hornersville	9 25 AM 8 35 AM 8 00 AM
No. 397		Mixed Daily Except Sunday	No. 398
5 55 PM 6 20 PM	264 3 267 9	Lv. Caraway-Hancock Jct. Ar Ar. Mandalay Lv	6 45 PM 6 20 PM
No. 991		Mixed Daily Except Sunday	No. 992
6 15 PM 6 50 PM	264.3 270.2	Lv. Caraway-Caraway Jct. Ar Ar. Rivervale Lv	7 30 PM 6 50 PM
No. 395		Mixed Daily Except Sunday	No. 396
3 45 PM 5 00 PM 6 15 PM 7 20 PM 10 15 PM 12 01 AM	240 1 251 6 264 3 279 7 311 2 346 0	Lv. Hornersville Ar Lv. Leachville Ar Caraway Trumann Ar. McDonald Lv Ar. Memphis Lv	4 10 AM 3 20 AM 2 15 AM 1 00 AM 10 15 PM 8 30 PM

James R. Fair, Jr

Local service schedules for the St. Francis Basin line, as shown in Cotton Belt public timetable for June 12, 1931.

amount of freight, primarily from the Singer mill which shipped exclusively over the Cotton Belt. Other industry along the line was light, and shipments included cotton, soybeans, liquified petroleum gas and similar commodities. Steam-powered ten-wheel locomotives gave way to diesel-electric road-switchers. Triweekly local service prevailed until February 6, 1971, when it was cut back to twice-weekly. The Leachville depot was abandoned in 1965, a joint agency there being maintained with the Frisco until December 15, 1970.²⁸

At noontime on a typical summer day in August 1971, engine 3506, a GP9 diesel numbered in the parent Southern Pacific series, would arrive in Trumann with five loads, four empties, and caboose No. 13. This was the turnaround run from Malden and it was duly checked in by Agent G. D. Melton. The loads were consigned to Singer. After a modest amount of switching, the train headed back north with one load (from Singer) and four empties. It moved along a track that had been maintained in fair condition with weeds under control, bridges sound, and soybeans growing up to the ballast edge on right-of-way land leased to farmers by the railroad. Melton was the only agent on the south end of the line.

Although in 1971 Singer shipped out 977 loads and received 300, this business was not nearly enough to support such a long branch line. On October 26, 1971 application for abandonment south of Gideon was made to the ICC, the Cotton Belt claiming losses of \$245,000 in 1970 and \$89,000 for the first six months of 1971. Approval came on July 10, and service ended on August 7, 1972.²⁹ Now, only the Malden-Gideon and Deering-Hornersville segments exist as reminders of an ambitious plan for a direct fast-freight line from St. Louis to Memphis.

The lesson learned from this venture is clear. Service cannot be improved with an inadequate railroad — one not even competitive with other Cotton Belt routes. If the originally-projected alignment south of Rivervale had been completed and adequately equipped, the project would undoubtedly have been successful. But the Great Depression intervened, caused compromises and resulted in financial debilitation. Still, several small northeast Arkansas and southeast Missouri communities had 40 years of rail service that were not really their due.

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The President's Page

Every year for any organization brings notable achievements and progress towards its goals — 1978 will be remembered as the year your Society brought an 11-year search for national insurance coverage to a close when the Board of Directors, meeting in Chicago on April 29, created Railtours of America, Inc., a wholly-owned subsidiary of the NRHS.

NRHS Insurance Chairman John Larkin of Northstar Chapter battled through the maze of problems and questions from underwriters and came up with what is undoubtedly the first such coverage for any railfan or historical group. What we have is coverage for any NRHS Chapter that desires to operate an excursion on a common carrier railroad, where that carrier requires that the sponsoring party furnish its own liability insurance. This requirement has turned many great trip ideas into closed files over the years but the new policy, which went into effect on July 1, will hopefully bring some of these "closed files" back into the realm of reality and also create new ideas for chapter excursions.

Details of how the plan works have been circulated among all NRHS chapters and officers and at mid-summer a number of proposals were already in the mail for coverage. It is anticipated that many chapters will seriously consider excursion operation that have hesitated in the past because of the lack of insurance or its high cost per trip when secured on an individual basis.

The Library of American Transportation received a superb collection of photographs covering the Pittsburgh Street Railways system in early 1978 from Harold L. Buckley, as a memorial to the late Joseph J. Jessel Jr., who assisted Mr. Buckley in the photography and assembly of this 2,064-Kodachrome-slide collection. The Library itself is beginning to receive material stored in various locations around the Society pending the location of a building to house the material.

The Jacobstown, New Jersey edifice is being renovated to serve the purpose of a library and during early 1978 an entrance vestibule was erected and various repairs to doors and windows accomplished. Work continued on through the summer and shelving for assembling artifacts was ordered.

Receipts from sale of Reading Company artifacts, as published in the *National Railway Bulletin* as a catalogue and order form, reached nearly \$2,000 and memorials to the late Gilbert Seymour, director-Potomac Chapter, approached \$700 at mid-summer. Chairman Pardee and Director Finkbiner of the Library trustees report regularly on possible new collections and monetary donations. Their job is very demanding and of immense value to your Society as we gather together the artifacts of yesterday and today for a well-chronicled history.

During 1978 a total of 37 members of your Society became eligible for their 25-year membership pins, having completed a quarter century of continuous membership in the NRHS. This list will grow each year and we are very proud of these men and women who have honored the NRHS by maintaining their membership and activity within the Society. This compliment by the membership is one we try to deserve and maintain as we plan the future of the NRHS.

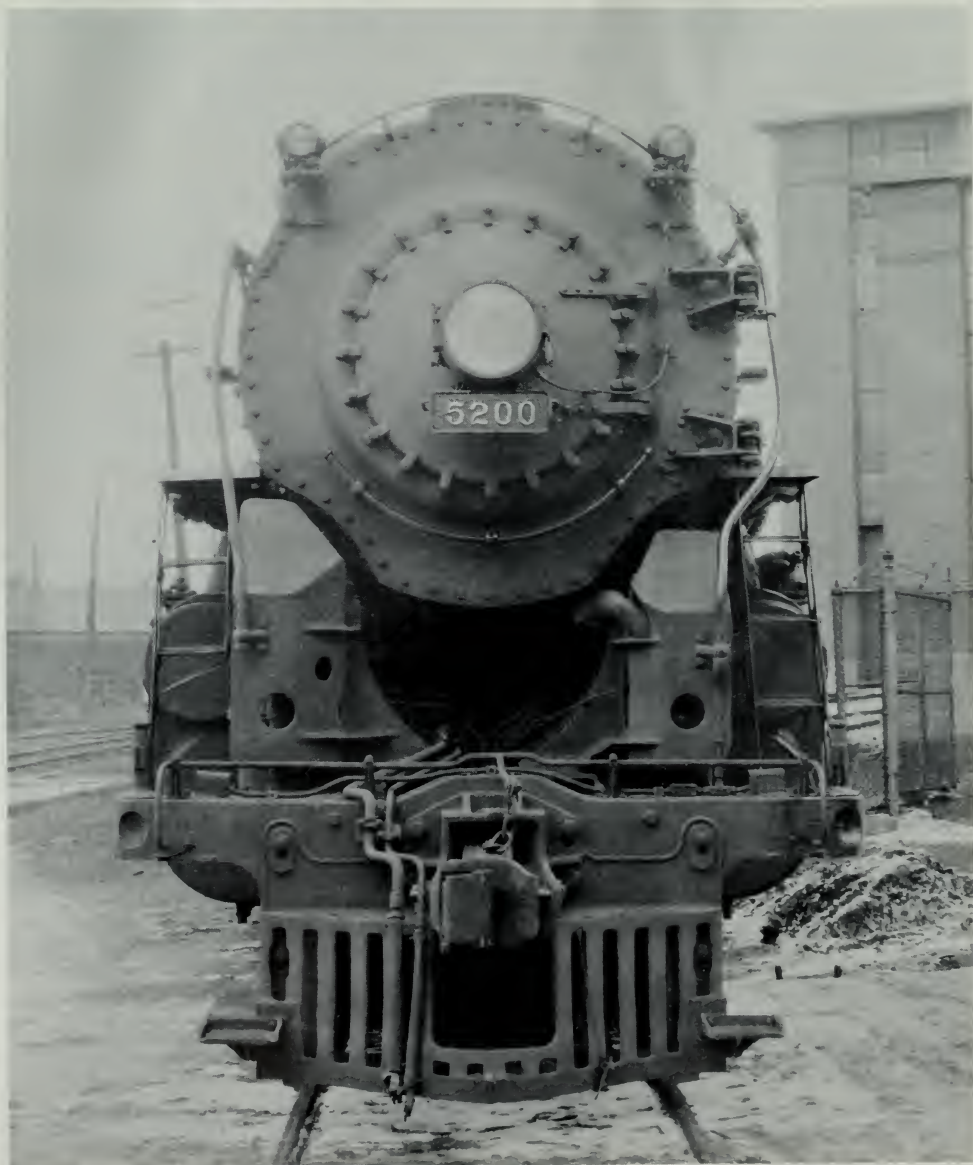
The railroadiana auction has become a popular activity within the Society, as well as in our sister organizations. One can browse through piles of timetables, books, post cards, photographs, china and all the trappings of the steel rails in one location. Two of the largest and most popular are those carried out each year by Tri-State and Inter-mountain Chapters. The former has been operating its "Rail Extravaganza" for several

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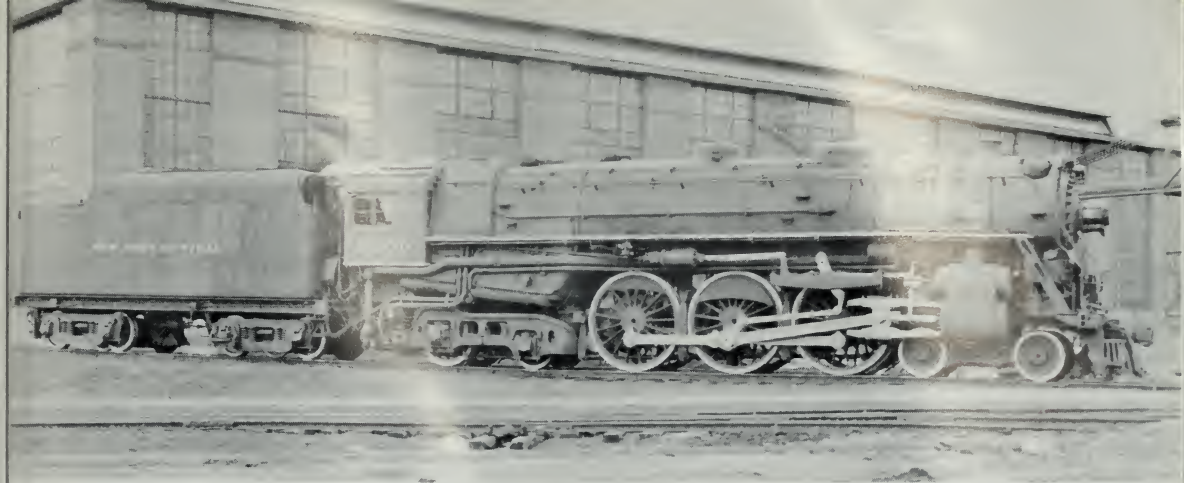
THE HUDSON

....created over
50 years ago

Louis F. Champlin



Alco Historic Photos



Alco Historic Photos

New York Central Hudson No. 5200 was the first of a famous line of bluebloods. After serving 26 years on NYC's Lines East, No. 5200 was retired on April 10, 1953. The fleet leader is seen here at the American Locomotive works in Schenectady, N.Y. on February 14, 1927, when the locomotive officially was christened in ceremonies at the plant.

Gather 'round you New York Central fans — you Hudson aficionados. In 1977, we celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the building of the first 4-6-4 steam locomotive in America, New York Central's J1 No. 5200. As reported in *Railway Mechanical Engineer*, locomotive No. 5200 was "placed in service by the New York Central following ceremonies at Schenectady, N.Y. on February 14 (1927), at which time it was formally delivered to the railroad by the American Locomotive Company and christened the "Hudson" type. The four-wheel trailer of the new locomotive permits the development of a material increase in boiler capacity and in maximum horsepower output in a six-coupled driving wheelbase over that obtainable in a Pacific type. The locomotive will be used in high speed mainline passenger service on the *Twentieth Century Limited*, the *Empire State Express*, the *Southwestern Limited*, the *Detroit*, and other important passenger trains where its added starting and horsepower capacity will permit a reduction in the number of sections of some of these trains which it is necessary to run with the present heavy Pacific-type motive power.

"The engineering in the design of the Hudson-type locomotive represents a distinct achievement in a number of features through the cooperative efforts of the . . . engineering department of the railroad and the engineering department of the builder. The locomotive develops a maximum rated tractive force of 53,111 lbs., including 10,900 lbs. supplied by the booster, which represents a substantial increase in tractive force over the present Pacific type locomotives. . . . With cylinders 25 in. by 28 in., operating at nominal full stroke cut-off, 79-in. driving wheels and a boiler pressure of 225 lbs. per sq. in., this tractive force is developed with a total weight on drivers of 182,000 lb. . . ."

RME noted the unusual speed with which the locomotive was assembled: "The boiler was received on the erecting floor on January 28, the main frames on February 1 and the cylinders on February 2. The locomotive was steamed, weighed and given its trial run on February 8, and completely finished and painted on February 9." Now, that's really moving!

No. 5200 was the first Hudson, but was closely followed by delivery of an order of four for the

Nickel Plate. The NKP locomotives, numbered 170-173, were built in American Locomotive's Brooks plant in Dunkirk, N.Y. They were slightly smaller than the New York Central Hudson in most respects; with 73 in. drivers and a steam pressure of 215 psi, the tractive force was 40,680 lbs. They were not equipped with boosters as was the 5200. In June 1929 the road awarded Lima a contract for four additional 4-6-4's, assigned Nos. 174-177. These were practically identical to the Brooks engines, the main difference being the addition of a cast bed. The eight Hudsons were the last steam addition to Nickel Plate's passenger stable until it equipped 23 Berkshires for passenger service in 1944-1946.

The Santa Fe also took delivery of Hudson-type locomotives in 1927, an order for ten from Baldwin. They were numbered 3450-3459; with 73 in. drivers and a 220 psi boiler pressure they developed a tractive force of 44,900 lbs. These engines were essentially a lengthening of the Santa Fe's 3400 Class Pacifics for greater grate area. It wasn't until 1937 that the Santa Fe, in another order of ten locomotives, went for a significant redesign and not just a reorder of the 3450 Class.

Railroads continued to purchase 4-6-4 type locomotives until 1948 when the last order, for five, was delivered to the Chesapeake & Ohio by Baldwin. These were the heaviest 4-6-4's ever built and were equipped with Franklin rotary cam poppet valves. Altogether, about 500 4-6-4's were built in the U.S. All but ten were for domestic use, the exported locomotives built by Alco for the National Railways of Mexico.

The total number of 4-6-4's was less than the production of most of the other locomotive classes in this country. For example, the total U.S. production of 2-8-4's was 750, 4-8-4's 950, 4-8-2's 2,400, and 4-6-2's 6,800. Of course, all of these numbers were small compared to the locomotive with the highest production record,



Alco Historic Photos

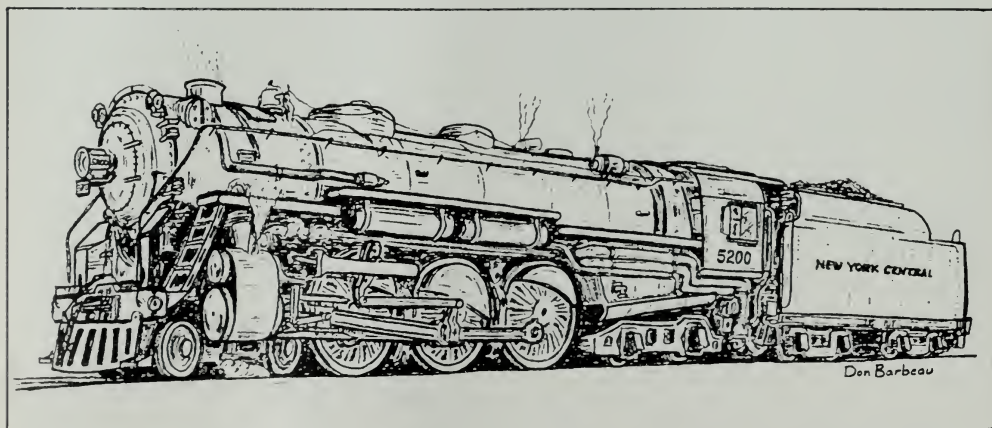
No. 5405, another classic 4-6-4, was photographed as it rolled off the assembly line at Alco. This engine was one of 40 Class J-1e Hudsons constructed during 1931. In total, 275 J's were built for the New York Central and all except the ten built by Lima were products of Alco.

the 2-8-0. About 33,400 of these popular freight haulers rolled out of the builders' shops, destined for both domestic and export use.

After delivery to the New York Central, No. 5200, which was given the class designation J1a by the railroad, was extensively tested on the Mohawk Division. To achieve continuity in testing, the same engineer and fireman were used on all tests. This assignment lasted for over four months. Performance exceeded expectations and the Central placed orders for 59 J1b Class Hudsons with Alco. NYC continued to order Hudsons over the next 11 years until the total finally reached 275. It took delivery of the last one, No. 5454, in 1938.

A total of 205 NYC Hudsons were given the classification J1a through J1e. These engines were delivered through 1931. However, not all

were delivered to the NYC; some were lettered New York Central Lines and assigned to other railroads on the system, the Michigan Central or the Big Four (Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis). While the J1's were being ordered and built, orders went out for the J2 Class. These were delivered in 1928, 1930, and 1931 to the subsidiary Boston & Albany and were lettered for that road. They differed from the J1's mainly in having 75 in. drivers in place of the 79 in. J1 drivers, and eight-wheel tenders in lieu of the 12-wheel J1 tenders. The smaller drivers gave increased tractive force in the rugged B & A territory. Of the J1's only No. 5200 and five J1b's for the Michigan Central were delivered with eight-wheel tenders; 5200's was replaced with a tender specifically designed for the Hudsons in October 1927. The J2 class finally totaled 20,



Over the years the Hudson locomotive has inspired many artists to portray its massive and attractive appearance. This rendering is the work of Mohawk & Hudson Chapter Member Don Barbeau.



Alco Historic Photos

The first of the last. Streamlined Hudson No. 5445 was the first of ten Class J3-a 4-6-4's built in 1938. This group represented the final order for this class of locomotives. NYC No. 5445 posed here at Alco's plant featured 79" drivers, had tractive force of 55,540 lbs. and weighed in at 365,500 lbs. The streamlining and color scheme were, of course, part of the overall design of the 1938 *20th Century Limited*.

the last ten of which were built by Lima (the only NYC Hudsons not built by Alco).

The next and final NYC Hudson purchase was for the J3a Class, a single order for 50 locomotives, the last ten of which were streamlined. Compared to the J1's they had (1) higher boiler pressure (275 vs. 225 psi), (2) a different boiler shape (bigger near the firebox and smaller at the smokebox), (3) smaller cylinder diameter (22½ vs. 25 in.) and longer stroke (29 vs. 28 in.), (4) either Scullin or Boxpok drivers in place of spoked drivers, and (5) roller bearings on all engine and tender wheels. In addition, the streamlined engines had roller bearings on the side and main rods.

The NYC Hudson was one of the best-known steam locomotives in the world, and was called by some the best looking steam locomotive in the world. Although many might argue the latter statement, certainly the J's must be classed as one of the handsomest locomotives.

But, however famous and handsome, the Hudson was eventually outclassed, first by the dual-purpose 4-8-2 Mohawk and finally by the 4-8-4 Niagara. By 1956 the Hudsons were gone from the NYC. They had lasted 29 years from 1927 to 1956, pulled some of the nation's most famous trains, and yet not a single one was saved. Their existence is recorded only in photographs, the written word, and the memories of those who were lucky enough to have seen and heard them racing across the Water Level Route.



NEW YORK CENTRAL SYSTEM HUDSON PURCHASES

CLASS	NUMBER ORDERED	YEAR BUILT	RAILROAD
J1a	1	1927	NYC
J1b	49	1927	NYC
J1b	10	1927-28	MC
J1c	25	1928-29	NYC
J1c	5	1929	MC
J1d	40	1929-30	NYC
J1d	20	1929-30	Big 4
J1d	15	1929-30	MC
J1e	30	1931	NYC
J1e	10	1931	Big 4
Subtotal	205		
J2a	5	1928	B&A
J2b	5	1930	B&A
J2c*	10	1931	B&A
Subtotal	20		
J3a	40	1937	NYC
J3a**	10	1938	NYC
Subtotal	50		
TOTAL	275		

NYC — New York Central

MC — Michigan Central

Big 4 — Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis

B&A — Boston & Albany

*Built by Lima, all others Alco

**Streamlined

Memories of the **B**est & **O**nly



A speech delivered to a joint banquet of the National Railway Historical Society and the Kentucky Railway Museum, February 11, 1978.

In my early childhood, I was only dimly aware that a revolution was taking place in America's transportation industry. Planes were still a fascination, and a luxury. Trucks were slow-moving. Cars? Affordable, yes, but not everyone owned one. Trains were still the mainstay. Railroads — some of them anyway — prided themselves on their luxurious, streamlined passenger trains.

I had the great fortune of growing up in an era when trains abounded. Northern Ohio was, and still is, richly industrial and flourishing. It was on the main line from New York to Chicago. For a person to travel between the two cities, he or she had to pass within 25 miles of my home in Medina, Ohio. A sleepy little town that had charm, Medina was far enough removed to avoid any big-city problems. And it had two railroads: the Akron, Canton & Youngstown, a bustling small road that tried valiantly to compete with the giants, and the Baltimore & Ohio. The B&O operated a small branch line of a branch line into Medina, but it was busy enough to provide work for one local freight a day and a through freight or two.

There were other lines nearby, especially the fabulous New York Central, an empire that brought to mind visions of railroad grandeur. We — my father, mother and brother — would take drives along the shores of Lake Erie, which the Central shared with the highway. We would stop alongside a country crossing and wait, in anticipation. Peering down the double high iron, we'd look for signs of one of the Central's

passenger trains. Suddenly, we'd hear it. First, a rumble in the distance, growing louder. Then the shrill air horn, blaring as the train neared. Whipping around a curve, it was on us, air horns blasting as it swept by, diesel engines roaring, the Central stripes but a blur, the gleaming cars only a streak, and the faces in the windows like a wisp of fog. The wind would swirl around us, kicking up leaves and debris. In an instant, it was gone, the **Mercury** disappearing in a cloud of dust, the air horns fading in the distance.

The Erie Railroad was nearby too, and it by this time was diesel only. The Erie had that distinctive diamond crest, and a penchant for stacking five growling units on the head end of its time freights.

The Nickel Plate also passed through my railroading territory. It boasted a single-track line, with diesels adorned in stripes not unlike those of a ferocious tiger. The NKP was still running a few of its famed Berkshires, the engine the road made famous, or was it the other way around? I remember those meets at a railroad town called Creston, where the aging but proud Berks stared defiantly down the throats of the idling diesels, which were lying in wait on the passing siding, foretelling the doom of steam but willing to wait patiently while those mighty 2-8-4's strode in their last moments of glory.

But for some reason, it was the B&O which captured my heart. It was a railroad of innovation, and while it was one of the first to have diesels in regular mainline service, it was also one of the last to scrap steam entirely. There was such a mix on the "Best & Only." And, it was THE big railroad that passed through my hometown, though the line was but a tiny branch of an empire.



H. K. Vollrath Collection

Author Robinson would occasionally spend summer evenings in Sterling, Ohio, where the B&O's Lake Branch split from the Chicago mainline. From the East he would see long coal drags approaching, powered by the enormous class EM-1 2-8-8-4 Yellowstone Mallets. They would turn North at Sterling heading for the steel mills at Lorain, Ohio. One of these giants, No. 7627, lays over at Lorain in October 1956. This "youngster" was built by Baldwin in 1945.

The spur was called the Medina Branch and it split from the Lake Branch at a small junction called Lester, which was about three miles from our town. The Medina Branch was a single track line, quaint enough to operate without signals, that cut through a woods and meandered into our town, where there was a small switching yard. The line serviced a pickle plant, a foundry, a honey plant, a warehouse, a team track and an interchange with the AC&Y. Our favorite spot was on a little hill overlooking the main part of the yard. On summer's days, my brother and I would listen for the whistle in the early morning, then jump on our bikes and ride to the overlook. We'd be level with the tops of the cars, and would spend hours just watching the switcher work.

The local in those days was frequently pulled by a powerful but aging 2-8-0, Class E-27ca, No. 2784. It would steam into our town with about five or six cars and a wooden caboose. By the time we'd get there the 2784 would be breaking down its train to begin switching. What a joy it was to watch as the steamer shunted back and forth, maneuvering around boxcars, picking and stabbing in and out of sidings. We'd make it a game, guessing which cars went where, and which cars would be coming out. We'd watch all of this until the crew took a "beans" break, and then we'd head home for some lunch ourselves. If it was a very good day, we'd talk my mother into an afternoon of train chasing. She'd get the car and drive us back to the yards. As the switcher headed south, so would we, for the country roads paralleled the tracks. We'd catch up to the engine, pacing it as it chugged along, waving to the crew and calling for the whistle. The engineer would oblige with a short toot or two.

Those summer days were wondrous. Filled with fresh air, and — for us — coal smoke, creosote and dust. We would spend some evenings in another railroad crossing town called Sterling, where the B&O's Lake Branch split from the Chicago main. What possibilities here! From the east came long coal drags, powered by the enormous EM-1 Class Yellowstone Mallets with a 2-8-8-4 wheel arrangement, one of the mightiest steam engines to walk the face of the earth. They'd turn north at Sterling with their tons and tons of coal in tow, heading for the steel mills at Lorain.

From the west would come the long freights, general merchandise, pulled usually by diesels. They too would turn north, heading for Cleveland. On the mainline was a collection of American railroading history. The fleet-footed Mikes, 2-8-2's, the mainstay of the B&O's Time-Saver fleet in the pre-diesel days, and still able to ship along, would parade by. The sun would be setting as we looked down the double-tracked main line, seeing first their smoke silhouetted against the clouds, then hearing the "chug-a-du, chug-a-du" of the fire-breathing machine. It would thunder by us, whistle screaming, slamming through the crossovers, cars with exotic road names from all over the country rolling behind. And while the freight roared by, the Fast Mail, pulled by silent E8 diesels, would sneak up, startling us with a blast from the air horn, gliding by to disappear into the sunset and leaving in its wake the rumbling freight, and a very happy young man.

August evenings come quickly in Ohio, carrying a welcome cool that whisks away the heat of the late summer day. Train time was at dusk. The family station wagon became our club car as



H. K. Vollrath Collection

During the author's boyhood days the B&O's Medina Branch local was pulled by a powerful but aging 2-8-0, No. 2784. It would steam into Medina, Ohio with about five or six cars and a wooden caboose. The class E-27ca steamer is seen here in Cleveland in August 1956. It was built by Richmond Locomotive Works in 1910; all engines of this class had been scrapped by 1959.

we shunted off to the sleepy crossroads village of Lester, a junction of three branches of the B&O. The cinders crunched under our tires as we drove along the railroad-owned entrance to the station, past the dwarfing wooden water tower with its dank smell of old, wet lumber and the constant stream of water gurgling through boards too old and tired to hold firm. When we'd pull up to the station itself, I would spring from the car and sprint past the vacant freight house to the telegraph office, burst through the door and greet the agent with, "Any trains?"

He'd lean back in his railroad-looking wooden chair, sip from his coffee cup and smile.

"Let's see," he'd say. "Got one up from Holloway. Coal drag, on Sterling's board. She'll be here in about 30 minutes."

Then, as I was about to blurt out my next question, he stopped me.

"She's a Mallet, and she'll take on water."

Christmas was here, in August! "She's a Mallet" meant only one thing in those twilight days of steam. The B&O's EM-1. The biggest steam engine ever, for all I knew — or cared. A beautiful machine, precision tuned to glide her million pounds of breathing energy across the rails with little effort. The masterpiece of a century of engine building. A locomotive that could pull 100 stubborn coal cars with the ease of my father picking up my toys. Terrifying up close, yet wondrous. The kind of engine that made little boys wish steam would never die, for surely I would grow up one day to sit at the throttle, to beckon young boys to marvel, as I did then.

Crickets sang and bullfrogs chirruped as I strained to hear the deep, mournful wail in the gathering darkness — the whistle unlike any

other. Sad, and ironic, the biggest, best and the last of an era carried the tone of death, the low cry that said at once the end was near, but the memory would linger on.

What's that? There she is! A chill down the spine, and I'm not cold! Now the familiar "chu-chu, chu-chu," as the low-slung headlight pierces the gloom. She's sauntering in, the proud old gal, pulling that coal with no apparent effort. A bit thirsty, yes, but happy as a lark, doing one of the many things she was designed for. She sighs to a stop.

We've got to get close to the water spout, but not *that* close! Here she comes! Snorting, panting, breathing fire and steam and smoke. The thick black smoke engulfs me — it's almost choking. Ouch! A hot cinder bath. But she's here now, motionless, frightening, massive. As big as a house, and alive. Her drivers are taller than I am, her drive rods thicker than my body. The fireman scurries across the huge tender to slake her 20,000-gallon thirst. The grime-covered engineer leans out of her second story window and smiles. He calls a greeting, then motions to us.

"Hey, you boys, you want to come up?"

The words are magic, and I'm stunned, speechless, unable to move. They echo across my mind, and I fight with myself. I have a great fear of this monster, and yet a burning desire to be a part of her, if just for a moment. I hesitate, then start slowly for the ladder.

It's made for giants, and halfway up a strong, gentle hand grasps me, and pulls me inside. I stand in awe. Gauges everywhere, telling the dwarfed men who command her what is going on in that great boiler. Her lifeblood is perpetually flowing. The engineer kicks open the butterfly



H. K. Vollrath Collection

EM-1 No. 7618 waits at Willard, Ohio with coal tonnage during July 1951. The author, as a boy, would often marvel at the sight of these massive Mallets as they took water at Lester, Ohio. Here the ultimate was reached, when an engineman invited him to spend a few glorious moments in the cab while the tender was being filled. No. 7618 was built by Baldwin in 1944 and all EM-1's featured 24x32 cylinders, 64" drivers and weighed 628,700 pounds each. B&O began scrapping the huge engines in 1957 and all were gone by 1960.

doors, and I peer into her furnace, searing hot, her very breath consuming a ton of coal every few minutes. I feel her pulse as I jump into the engineer's coveted seat. My sweaty palms grip her throttle, and I peer out her window, imagining I'm heading her to the Lake Port with a string of loaded hoppers behind me, glancing down with a knowing smile at every small boy, so far below, who dreams of being in this seat where I am now.

The dream is broken. The fireman swings down from the tender. The EM-1 is full, and it's time to go. I say my thanks, gingerly climb

down from the heights and brush the soot on my hands onto my pants. The huge engine couples to the train and, stacks blasting and drivers straining, slams past, showering me again with smoke and hot cinders. I wave again to the engineer. Her wailing whistle deepens as she moves on, and I leave with the sound of clanking coal cars in my ears.

"You sure got dirty up there," my mother greeted me, back at the car.

"Yeah, I guess I did."

Railroaders always do.



MAINLINES

RAILROAD NEWS
IN REVIEW



AMTRAK — At the end of May (when this was written), Amtrak's future was as clouded as any political crystal ball. The DOT had released the results of its study of the national rail passenger system and recommended that it be pared back. Amtrak, it found, was running a lot of trains that really didn't need to be run, that were losing more money than really seemed right. Cutting them out of the schedule would save a hundred or so million dollars some time in the future, and they'd never be missed — except by the politicians through whose states they ran. They savings would be relatively small compared to the total losses projected for the rest of the system, but so what? Concentrate your thoughts on the dollars that would be saved! Arguments that the country will need more rail passenger service in days to come — not less — cut little ice.

The principal eliminations proposed by DOT were long-haul routes from Chicago to Florida and to the west through Omaha and Salt Lake City; also one of the routes from Chicago to Seattle. The train to Dallas (from St. Louis) would be dropped, as well as some of the runs through Virginia and West Virginia. In all, about 30 percent of Amtrak's route mileage would be eliminated, though not that many trains. And the recommendations did not go into trains whose losses are subsidized by the states involved.

Coincidentally or not, DOT's recommendations saw the light of day only after Amtrak's avid proponent, its president Paul Reistrup, had been replaced by Alan Boyd. Those who remembered Boyd's seeming lack of enthusiasm for the National Rail Passenger Corporation concept when he was the first Transportation Secretary had some doubts that he would resist the proposal — which would put it pretty much up to Congress. And it had been mostly at the insistence of various Congressmen that the routes in question had been established in the first place. Before anything happens there will have to be public hearings and studies by the ICC, but Congress will have the last say.

We liked the newspaper cartoon by MacNelly (Richmond News Leader/Chicago Tribune) showing the fireman of a wood-burning steam engine hacking away with an axe at an old wooden Amtrak station, while the ticket agent inside announced that there would be another delay while the locomotive took on more fuel (i.e., parts of the station).

OTHER AMTRAK EVENTS — Amtrak's station in Emporia, Kan., won the 1978 designation as "Station of the Year". Factors included in awarding this honor are performance and attitude of employees, neatness of the ticket office, accuracy and efficiency in providing information to the public, landscaping and lighting, general housekeeping and level of service to customers. Runners-up were Philadelphia, Sacramento and Winter Park, Fla.

A poll conducted for Amtrak by the Louis Harris firm indicated that a clear majority of Americans feel that Amtrak is doing a good job, and want to see further improvements in both quality and quantity of train service. On the average, 55 percent gave Amtrak good marks this year compared to only 40 percent in a similar poll back in 1972.

A new Amtrak station for Minneapolis and St. Paul was officially dedicated in March with a day-long open house attended by over 5,000 people. In Ohio, the former temporary station in Cleveland was reincarnated as a new station in Elyria, and opened for business with a ribbon cutting ceremony. The **Lake Shore Limited** stops there daily.

And Amtrak trains are now running faster over the Missouri Pacific, following an agreement finally worked

out with that railroad to allow passenger trains to go faster than freights. Speeds up to 75 mph will be permitted in some places.

By last spring, the new Turboliner and diesel locomotive maintenance facility in Rensselaer, N.Y., was getting up to speed, with all the remaining Amtrak E units in the state assigned there for maintenance. This reduced the Amtrak workload at Harmon shops to just the FL9's into Grand Central. (Of course, Harmon still has all the MTA commuter equipment.) The Rensselaer facility hosted a three-hour inspection trip for NRHS members in April.

IN NEW YORK STATE — At the Mohawk & Hudson Chapter's May meeting, New York State Railroad Administrator Louis Rossi reviewed in detail the programs and progress to date in upgrading the State's rail passenger service. Speeds of 110 mph are planned within another year, using the Amtrak Turboliners on realigned and resigalled Conrail tracks. Of particular interest was his statement that when the new station in downtown Schenectady is completed by next summer, Empire Service trains from New York City which now terminate in Albany-Rensselaer will continue on to Schenectady, greatly increasing that city's rail service.

Another interesting announcement concerned disposition of the former D&H equipment for the **Adirondack** — Alco PA locomotives, conventional coaches and diners — which had been refurbished at State expense when that service was first instituted. While it was nominally D&H equipment, the State had the say-so as to how and where it was used. And of course it was idled when the Turboliners became available for the route. Rossi indicated that New York was planning to take over full title to the coaches, diners, etc., in return for which it would relinquish all claims on the PA's. D&H would be free to dispose of them as it wished. As of last spring, the cars were on loan to the MTA for commuter service to New York City, and the PA's were leased to the MBTA to supplement the winter-ravaged commuter equipment in the Boston area.

HIGH-LOW — Opposite ends of the financial scale of fortune were reported by two southern-type railroads for the first quarter of 1978. Southern Railway's earnings of \$29 million were the highest of any quarter in its history, while Norfolk & Western posted its first quarterly operating loss since its merger in 1964. Winter weather and the coal strike were what did in the NW, which expected quick recovery in the spring. "Well balanced traffic mix" and reductions in track maintenance were what put the Southern on top.

Conrail, the giant under everybody's magnifying glass, had a lousy first quarter, too, also due largely to the coal strike and severe winter weather. Its \$216 million deficit was \$8 million more than last year, but about what had been expected.

HAZARDS — Spring saw the DOT continuing to put the squidge on rail transportation of hazardous material in potentially hazardous fashion. An accelerated schedule was set for installing new safety couplers on all tank cars, and for head shields and thermal insulation coatings on tank cars carrying flammable gas products. In late April, DOT even ordered the New York, Susquehanna & Western to cease carrying hazardous materials altogether when it found that the tracks be-

tween Jersey City and Butler failed to meet minimum track safety standards. The beleaguered NYS&W hadn't done any track maintenance since it filed for bankruptcy in January 1976.

CHIPS FROM THE ROCK — The Rock Island may win its battle to discontinue all non-commuter passenger service. Rock is one of the few railroads that elected to keep its intercity trains rather than join Amtrak in 1971, and it still provides passenger service from Chicago to Rock Island and Peoria. But few passengers seem to know it — all four daily trips averaged a total of only 44 passengers a day last year. In May, an ICC administrative law judge ruled on an appeal that the road should be allowed to terminate the service, saying that there were adequate bus and plane alternatives, and that the need for the current "poor service" provided by the railroad is almost nonexistent. However, the full Commission still had to rule on it, and the move was opposed by the Illinois Commerce Commission. The State has been footing two-thirds of the \$1.5 million annual loss.

On another front, Rock Island finally reached agreement with the Southern Pacific for the SP to purchase the Rock's 966-mile line between Santa Rosa, N.M., and St. Louis via Kansas City. The Rock had fought this off for several years, but came to an agreement as part of its bankruptcy proceedings. The deal still had to be approved by the court and the ICC.

SPRINT — The Milwaukee Road has started a new experimental "high frequency" piggyback service between Chicago and Minneapolis/St. Paul. Known as "Sprint" trains, they depart each weekday three times a day from both terminals, and once on Saturday, covering the 400-plus miles in a running time of ten hours. It's a year-long demonstration project funded by the FRA, with contract administration by the AAR. Main features are frequent service and direct origin-to-destination operation with no yard handling in between.

VIA RAIL — Canada's parallel to Amtrak officially started operating that country's rail passenger service on April 1. Amtrak critics thought the April Fool's date might be prophetic, but VIA Rail officials said they had a lot going for them. They were starting out with good track and equipment rather than a legacy from the Penn Central, and they didn't expect the kind of political pressures that Amtrak has come to know and hate. VIA's cross-continent route structure on only two railroads ought to help, too.

WASHINGTON UNION STATION — The editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal* recently had this to say:

"In their wisdom, Washington officials decided a decade ago to convert spacious Union Station into a National Visitors Center. Railroad passengers were shunted through plywood corridors to a cramped ticket office and waiting room, and the old waiting room was hollowed out for an elaborate slide-show, called the Primary Audio Visual Experience. Now, since passengers outnumber tourists by at least ten to one, officials want to cover over the slide-show and turn the place back into a waiting room. Total cost is estimated at \$100 million, an over-run of 625%".

GREAT RAILROADS — Frisco fans will find an in-depth description of this railroad and its business in *Railway Age's* "Great Railroads" series, in the February 27, 1978 issue.

The same issue contains the Santa Fe's colorful 28-page public relations booklet entitled "Who in the World Needs Railroads?", explaining graphically what railroads contribute to today's society and industry — a great piece, obviously designed for wider distribution than to RA readers (many copies, for example, have gone to schools).

TECHNICAL TIDBITS — Even amid the complexities of modern day technology, it's the simple ideas that often have the biggest payoff. Here are three recent examples that seem to have good potential:

- Amtrak has been evaluating the idea of a fuel tender for diesel locomotives (essentially a fuel oil tank on wheels behind the locomotive) that would permit long runs without refueling stops. Potential? Elimination of numerous fueling stations on the system, with their attendant problems of spillage, maintenance, lost time, etc. Most existing stations will require spending up to a half million dollars each to meet new Environmental Protection Agency standards.
- Canadian National (and other roads) are service testing a freight car truck steering arrangement that angles the axles on curves so that each axle stays lined up with the track. Cuts down friction and the tendency of the wheels to climb the rails on curves. The device can be retrofitted to most existing trucks. Reductions in rail and wheel wear and fuel consumption may equal as much as \$1,000 per car per year.
- Last winter the Boston & Maine adapted some of its snow-crippled Budd RDC cars to push-pull service with regular GP7 diesel locomotives. A special connector cable allowed operation of the locomotive from the cab of the RDC. Seems like an added degree of flexibility that might come in handy in other situations, once you know how to do it.

THE CAR BUILDERS — Norfolk & Western announced a new lease on life for its East End car shop last spring when it broke precedent to take a contract to build cars for another railroad. The customer is Conrail. Five hundred 100-ton open-top coal hopper cars are in the \$15 million package; they will be leased by Conrail. NW, under the name of the Shenandoah-Virginia Corporation, is spewing them out at a rate of five a day to complete the job by early fall.

These 500 cars are actually but a small part of Conrail's total 100-ton hopper car acquisitions (by lease) for 1978. Bethlehem Steel is building 2,500 more, and another 1,000 are coming from Pullman Standard. Conrail's own shops are fully loaded in its "major car rebuilding and maintenance program which has restored more than 11,000 hopper cars to service", according to Conrail Chairman Edward Jordan.

On the passenger side, Amtrak has been waiting a long time for its new Superliner coaches on order from Pullman, which were held up by a lengthy strike. The strike was settled in the spring, and word was that the first cars might be available by October.

SHARKS LIVE ON — Those two Baldwin shark-nose diesels that were the pride and joy of former D&H President Bruce Sterzing — the last two in captivity — held little appeal for the D&H's new management. They managed to sell them intact for use on the Michigan Northern Railroad, where they are no doubt drawing the attention of numerous railfans in that area, as they did in the East.

DAYLIGHT — Southern Pacific has taken delivery of four rebuilt GE U25B diesels for evaluating a new power plant over various terrains. Rebuilding was done by Morrison Knudsen, using turbocharged V-12 engines from Sulzer in Switzerland. The units are designated by MK as TE70-4S (standing for 70,000 pounds tractive effort, four axles) and are rated at 2,800 hp. Of further interest to train watchers: they are painted in SP's old Daylight colors of red and orange.

COTTON BELT . . .

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Notes

1. *Railway Age* 90, 402 (February 21, 1931)
2. *Interstate Commerce Commission Reports* 150, 685
3. *ibid* 23, 631
4. *ibid* 103, 406
5. *ibid* 23, 630
6. *ibid* 103, 360
7. BL&AS timetables of the mid-twenties showed the Rivervale-Lepanto segment "under construction," indicating at least a view toward completing a connection to the Frisco.
8. *ICC Reports* 23, 565
9. *ibid* 125, 36
10. Dew, L. A., "The Chicago Mill Line," *Craighead County Historical Quarterly* 8, No. 2, 8-13 (Spring 1970)
11. *ICC Reports* 158, 206
12. St. Louis Southwestern Railway Company, Annual Report for 1929
13. *Railway Age* 86, 1487, (June 22, 1929)
14. *ibid* 88, 60 (January 4, 1930)
15. *ICC Reports* 162, 625
16. *ibid* 82, 651
17. *Railway Age* 88, 1450 (June 14, 1930)
18. *ICC Reports* 110, 74
19. *ibid* 103, 286
20. Operating timetables, St. Louis Southwestern Railway Company
21. St. Louis Southwestern Railway Company, Annual Report for 1930
22. Jonesboro (Ark.) *Daily Tribune*, November 12, 1930
23. *Railway Age* 89, 1180 (November 22, 1930)
24. ICC Finance Docket 15081, unpublished summary
25. Patterson, S., "Like a Blue Streak," *Trains* 23, No. 1, 18 (November 1962)
26. *Railway Age* 92, 561 (April 2, 1932)
27. *ICC Reports* 212, 345. Also, at this time the Hancock-Mandalay branch was abandoned; see *ibid* 212, 347
28. Discussions by the author with various employees
29. ICC Finance Docket 26876, unpublished summary

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Dew, L. A., *The J L C & E, the History of an Arkansas Railroad*, Arkansas State University Press, Jonesboro, 1968.

ABO CANYON . . .

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Abo Canyon, extending about 4.5 miles from above Sais to Scholle. Eons ago the rushing Abo River carved out this gorge through the Manzano Mountains but now the river is merely a dry wash most of the year. However, it is still known to vent its fury in occasional flash floods during the rainy season. All in all, the AT&SF crosses the river bed eight times on dramatic steel and concrete bridges in the scenic canyon.

Abo Canyon is inaccessible by automobile; however, the intrepid railfan can easily walk in along the tracks from either Sais or Scholle to find excellent vantage points for photography. Just across the big bridge above Sais one finds intriguing evidence of the massive "Santa Fe Crusher" where ballast was quarried to double-track the line from Belen to Gallup before World War II. Although the main structure was razed long ago, the rusted spur tracks remain in place and a decrepit, ancient wooden coach lettered "Sharp & Fellowes" (contractors from Los Angeles) is a mute sentinel which creaks and groans only because of the wind howling off the desert.

Today the Belen Cutoff hums with bustling coast-to-coast traffic on one of the finest railroads in America. Impeccable roadbed, welded rail and beautifully maintained motive power add up to a most impressive operation. Seemingly oblivious to the energy crunch, the AT&SF routinely powers 25-car hotshots with three or four big diesels. Ordinarily, at least ten trains run over the line daily during daylight hours — even in slack seasons. The scenery is grand and the railroad is truly exciting. The Santa Fe fan who hasn't seen Abo Canyon hasn't really lived!

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Continued From Page 11

Long before the end of the passenger service to Suisun, Vacaville's interurban underwent two important corporate changes. Outmaneuvered by the Oakland, Antioch & Eastern Railway, which completed a line between the East Bay and Sacramento in 1913, the Northern Electric canceled plans for building its Sacramento-Vallejo line — a move which left the Vacaville-Suisun section high and dry. But even with contraction the road could not survive. Bankrupt by 1914, it passed into receivership and was reorganized in 1918 as the Sacramento Northern Railroad. Three years later the Western Pacific took control, fulfilling the prophetic rumors that had surfaced 15 years before. Needing feeder lines for its transcontinental service, Western Pacific in 1929 also absorbed the San Francisco-Sacramento trackage (formerly the Oakland, Antioch & Eastern and known after 1920 as the Sacramento Short Line), and made plans which never materialized, to complete the old V&N to Vallejo.

Two years before, Western Pacific had finally tied the Vacaville-Suisun line to Sacramento and Oakland by completing a short freight feeder to Creed. The fruit growers at last had a workable alternative to Espee, but by that time Vacaville's fresh fruit industry was practically on its last breath.

Information on the Vaca Valley & Clear Lake Railroad can be found in Incorporation Files 299-RR and 302-RR of the California State Archives, Sacramento. See also Meredith Stephens, "The Vaca Valley and Clear Lake Railroad" (unpublished paper, University of California at Davis, 1971). Almost all information on railroad activities and attitudes in Vacaville was taken from the files of the *Vacaville Reporter*. On fruit production and marketing, the best sources are Erich O. Kraemer and H. E. Erdman, "History of Cooperation in the Marketing of California Fresh Deciduous Fruits" (California Agricultural Experiment Station *Bulletin* 557, 1933); and William A. Bowen, "The Evolution of a Cultural Landscape: the Valley Fruit District of Solano County, California" (unpublished M. A. thesis, University of California at Berkeley, 1966). On electric interurbans consult George W. Hilton and John F. Due, *The Electric Interurban Railways in America* (Stanford University Press, 1960); and Harre Demoro, "The Sacramento Northern Railway," in the National Railway Historical Society *Bulletin* (Vol. 37, 1972). Southern Pacific corporation data and merger records can be found in the Southern Pacific Archives, San Francisco. For a "revisionist" account of the Southern Pacific's role in California, see Richard J. Orsi, "The Octopus Reconsidered: the Southern Pacific and Agricultural Modernization in California, 1865-1915." *California Historical Quarterly*, LIV (Fall, 1975).

PRESIDENT'S PAGE . . . *Continued From Page 35*

seasons and "Railfair" in Denver had its second show this past July. I had the pleasure of visiting the Mile-High City for that event and was very impressed by the detailed arrangements and attendance. Dick Luckin and his wife are to be complimented for the fine show, as are the many Intermountain members who assisted.

If it's innovative and interesting, you'll probably find it started with an NRHS Chapter project. It's YOUR Society — work at it!

V. Allan Vaughn

Stephen D. Maguire photographed International Railway Company's No. 5001 many years ago in Buffalo, N.Y. The car was built by Kuhlman in 1906 and was being used on the route that ran on Main from the DL&W Station to the city line.





David W. Richter illustrates the pleasant atmosphere at the Connecticut Electric Railway Museum at Warehouse Point, Conn. Car No. 840 (ex Connecticut Company) and over 40 pieces of electric equipment are at the museum including other streetcars, freight locomotives and work cars. Three steam locomotives also can be seen, an O-4-OT, a Climax and a fireless cooker. The cars operate Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays year-round and they run a three-mile, 17-minute trip over a rebuilt portion of the Rockville Branch of the Hartford & Springfield Street Railway.